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**JOHN EDWARDS (1637-1716) ON THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL:
THE DEBATE ON THE RELATION BETWEEN DIVINE
NECESSITY AND HUMAN FREEDOM IN LATE
SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY AND EARLY
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND**

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CALVIN
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
JEONGMO YOO

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

MAY 2011

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Soli Deo Gloria!

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines John Edwards' (1637-1716) doctrine of free choice, focusing on his understanding of the relation between divine necessity and human freedom as an illustration of the way Reformed theologians of the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth century developed their ideas of human free choice. Even though free choice is an important theme in the history of Reformed theology, Reformed teaching on free choice has gained much less attention by modern scholars than other Reformed themes such as faith, grace and predestination. Moreover, the traditional Reformed doctrine of free choice has been frequently criticized as metaphysical or philosophical determinism by modern scholars. The crux of this evaluation or criticism is the claim that the classical Reformed doctrine of divine necessity such as divine decree, predestination, foreknowledge, providence, and grace rule out human freedom or contingency of events in the world.

Filling the historiographical gap, this dissertation raises a fundamental question concerning the criticism of the Reformed doctrine of free choice in relationship to divine necessity as determinism. Unlike the deterministic interpretation of traditional Reformed thought on free choice, the substantive and careful study of Edwards' writings on free choice in the intellectual context of the seventeenth and the eighteenth century shows that in Edwards' view, human beings retain the natural freedom from compulsion and freedom of contrary choice even after the Fall, and divine necessity such as decree, predestination, foreknowledge, providence, and grace does not exclude human free choice at all. Therefore, in so far as human freedom and contingencies are maintained by Edwards, especially with respect to divine necessity, his thought does not conform to the stereotype of Reformed theology as a deterministic system. Consequently, the examination of Edwards' view of free choice points toward the need for a broad

reassessment of Reformed understanding of free choice in the Reformation and Post-Reformation eras.

PART I: JOHN EDWARDS IN CONTEXT

Chapter 1: Introduction

I. Thesis Statement

This thesis intends to prove that, even in an era when the main lines of the development of philosophy were toward determinism,¹ John Edwards' idea of human free choice defies the myth that Reformed orthodox theology argues the complete loss of freedom because sin exerts a bondage of the will, or because divine foreknowledge and predestination reduce human beings to passive pawns.² This dissertation will demonstrate that Edwards' doctrine of free choice clearly shows that human beings retain the natural freedom from compulsion and freedom of contrary choice even after the fall, and that, in Edwards' view, the divine decree in no way removes human free choice.

¹ Concerning the definition and brief history of the term, "determinism," see "Determinisme," s.v. in Andre Lalande, ed. *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie*, 7th ed. (Paris, 1956), 221-224. It distinguishes it into four different nuances: "sense concret," "sense abstrait," "doctrine philosophique," and "fatalisme." For the current issue of our study, its definition of determinism as "doctrine philosophique" is relevant: "Doctrine philosophique suivant laquelle tous les événements de l'univers, et en particulier les actions humaines, sont liés d'une façon telle que 'es choses étant ce qu'elles sont à un moment quelconque du temps, il n'y ait pour chacun des moments antérieurs ou ultérieurs, qu'un état et un seul qui soit compatible avec le premier." Ibid., 213. It states that the term, "determinism" was coined in German philosophy around 1830-40 and thus it is a recent term: "Le terme *déterminisme* est récent. Il ne se trouve pas dans EIBNIZ, bien que tous les critiques s'accordent à l'employer pour designer la doctrine de la nécessité, et bien que lui-même se serve souvent en ce sens s mots *détermination* et *raison déterminante* Ce mot a été emprunté vers 1830-1840 à la philosophie allemande, dans laquelle il était également d'usage nouveau. (Il semble avoir été d'abord me abbreviation de *praedeterminismus*, plus ancien. On trouve, dans LEIBNIZ, *praedelineatio*.) – Il figure dans, l'*Encyclopédie* de ERSCH et GRUBER (Leipzig, 1832), et dans la table alphabétique de l'édition de Leibniz par ERDMANN (1840), où il est d'ailleurs noncé sous la forme française *Déterminisme*." Ibid., 213-14. For more detailed information on the origin of the term, see *ibid.*

² In *Dictionary*, when defining free will, Richard A. Muller states that "*liberum arbitrium*" is "often loosely and incorrectly rendered 'free will.'" Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 176. In his works, John Edwards also uses the term "free will" for *liberum arbitrium*. In this study, however, I will use the term free choice rather than the term free will in reference to *liberum arbitrium* because it is the more precise English interpretation of *liberum arbitrium*. When I use the term free will, unless otherwise noted or is obvious from the context, I am referring to the freedom from compulsion that is part of the nature of the faculty of will (*voluntas*). Nevertheless, when I directly quote Edwards' or other figures' primary sources, I will not make any change for their use of terms.

II. Statement of the Problem

John Edwards (1637-1716) was a British Reformed theologian who produced several significant works on the doctrine of human free choice in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries.³ His placement in the historical development of this topic establishes him as a high watermark of the Reformed contribution on free choice. Living and writing after the second half of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century, Edwards had the privilege of looking back over years of development of the doctrine of free choice and debate over it. By his time, the Reformed doctrine of free choice had been significantly developed, especially through debates with its opponents such as the Jesuits and the Remonstrants. However, Reformed orthodoxy's struggles on the topic were far from over. Arminian and Socinian controversies continued to rise up prominently in England.⁴

Notably, Edwards stands out as the most formidable advocate of the Reformed position during debates occurring in England during the second half of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th century, as evidenced both in intellectual ability and voluminous literary output on the topic. In spite of his accomplishments, no major historical treatment of Edwards' contribution on the doctrine of free choice has been produced. What is more, historical scholarship has shown little interest in Edwards' life and thought including this aspect of his contribution.

It is not simply that scholarship on Edwards' contribution on free choice is lacking. There is also a lack of historical work on the Reformed doctrine of free choice altogether.⁵ Free choice is an important theme in the history of Reformed theology

³ For the life and work of John Edwards, see A. Kippis and others, eds., *Biographia Britannica, or, The lives of the most eminent persons who have flourished in Great Britain and Ireland*, 2nd ed, 5 vols. (1778-93), vol. 5, 543-46; C. J. Robinson and Stephen Wright, "John Edwards," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 17 (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 937-38.

⁴ The development of Reformed doctrine of free choice up to Edwards' time will be dealt with in detail in the following chapter.

⁵ Here, "Reformed understanding of human free choice in general" refers to Reformed doctrine of human free choice in general during Reformation and Post Reformation periods. I will basically limit my

because its concept directly influences the formation of other major theological doctrines such as predestination, grace, conversion and sin.⁶ Reformed teaching on free choice, however, has gained much less attention by modern scholars than other Reformed themes such as faith, grace and predestination. Thus, there are few detailed studies of Reformed doctrine on free choice.⁷ This poses the problem that there is a major doctrine of the Reformed tradition that has not been historically analyzed in a significant and satisfactory manner.

Besides the scarcity of studies on Edwards and on the Reformed doctrine of free choice, previous scholarship's interpretation of Reformed doctrine of free choice is problematic. Both traditional and modern scholars have tended to accept the interpretation of the opponents of Reformed theology without considering its own witness. In other words, without careful and meticulous study of the primary sources, they have relied on secondary literature to criticize the Reformed doctrine of free choice.⁸

discussion to considering Reformed thought of free choice during these eras. Thus, in this study, I will not deal with the modern Reformed view of free choice and scholarship on it. For instance, the debates between Alvin Plantinga and others, such as Anthony Flew, are beyond the scope of this study. In sum, when I use the expression, "Reformed doctrine (understanding or thought) of free choice," unless otherwise noted or is obvious from the context, I am referring to Reformed thought on free choice during the Reformation and Post Reformation periods.

⁶ Indeed, the debate about the nature of free choice and its relation with divine necessity is one of the enduring themes in the study and development of Christian theology. William Cunningham is certainly not exaggerating when he comments, "There is perhaps no subject which has occupied more of the time and attention of men of speculation." William Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, vol. 1 (Great Britain: Banner of Truth Trust, 1969), 569.

⁷ Of course, one can see several studies on Luther and Calvin's doctrine of free choice. However, previous scholarship has been focusing only on these two early Reformers and thus other Reformers' view of free choice and especially that of the Reformed orthodox thinkers has been largely neglected. For the summary of previous scholarship on Luther and Calvin's understanding of free choice, see Kiven S. K. Choy, "Calvin's Defense and Reformulation of Luther's Early Reformation Doctrine of the Bondage of the Will" (PhD diss., Calvin Theological Seminary, 2010), 1-29.

⁸ Thus, the analysis of the primary texts of the Reformed writers is largely absent in their works. Some of them attempt to examine the original texts to criticize the position of the classical Reformed thinkers. However, they regard Calvin, Zwingli or Jonathan Edwards as the representatives of the Reformed position on the issue and, without examining any scholastic orthodox thinkers, they deal with them only to vindicate their arguments. Consequently, ignoring the development of post-Reformation orthodoxy on the topic, they tend to reach the conclusion that since Zwingli, Calvin, or Jonathan Edwards are determinists, the whole Reformed tradition is deterministic. There are too many such cases to mention them all. For example, Reichenbach exemplifies Calvin and Jonathan Edwards to explain the Reformed doctrine of

Moreover, many modern scholars have not considered Reformed teaching on free choice in its own intellectual context. They particularly failed to understand the scholastic use of philosophical language such as causality and necessity used in the Reformation and Post-Reformation eras.⁹ Consequently, these problems of the older scholarship resulted in an inaccurately deterministic interpretation of Reformed teaching on free choice and its related issues. Therefore, this dissertation intends to fill the historiographical gap mentioned above as well as correct the reading of the Reformed doctrine of free choice provided by the secondary sources.

III. Present Status of the Problem

The shortage of recent secondary sources on John Edwards is striking, considering the importance of his life and works during Post-Reformation times. During his own time, he acquired a great reputation as a pastor, theologian, and public lecturer. So, in his day, Edwards was respected as “the Paul, the Augustine, the Bradwardine, the Calvin, of his age” and “one of the most valuable writers of his time.”¹⁰

human will and identifies their positions with the whole Reformed tradition. Bruce R. Reichenbach, “Freedom, Justice, and Moral Responsibility,” in *The Grace of God, The Will of Man*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 282-85; Strauss uses Jonathan Edwards as “a paradigm for the theological determinism” implicit in the Calvinistic system of theology. James D. Strauss, “A Puritan in a Post-Puritan World—Jonathan Edwards,” in *Grace Unlimited* ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany Fellowship, 1975), 244.

⁹ Cf. Even though causality is efficient, sufficient, material, and final in the seventeenth century Reformed theology, the modern scholars tend to reduce causality to efficiency only, thus misunderstanding the nature of causality. For instance, to Brunner, causality is only efficient. Thus, in order to avoid deterministic interpretation of the relation between God and human beings, he states “There is causality between created objects, but there is none between the Creator and the Creation. Particularly in the question of human freedom do we see how questionable it is to attempt to transfer the principle of causality to the relation between God and the world A personal relation simply cannot be rendered by the causal idea which belongs to the sphere of ‘things.’ Therefore, it is better not even to suggest a causal explanation, and to renounce the causal idea altogether in relation to the Divine activity.” Emil Brunner, *Dogmatics: The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption*, vol 2. trans. Olive Wyon (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), 153-54. For the definition of the terms, contingency (*contingentia*), causality (*causa*), and necessity (*necessitas*) in Protestant scholastic theology, see Muller, *Dictionary*, 81, 61-64, 199-200, respectively.

¹⁰ “Edwards,” *Britannica*, 546.

More specifically, Edwards became renowned for his controversy with theological adversaries such as John Locke and Daniel Whitby. In his time, not only Arminianism but also movements such as Socinianism and Deism had made a devastating impact on the churches in England. Thus, Edwards actively engaged in controversies to defend the theology of orthodoxy. His name is mentioned quite often in the older literature as a major advocate of a strongly Calvinistic position against various adversaries in Cambridge in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.¹¹

Among those controversies, his debate with Daniel Whitby (1638-1726), who was a representative Arminian of his time, is noteworthy. In his debate with Whitby, Edwards makes an effort particularly to defend the Reformed view of free choice and its relation to divine necessity. Thus, in his *The Arminian Doctrine Condemned* (1711) against Whitby, he devotes a large portion of the treatise to discussing highly provocative theological issues in detail, such as whether the liberty of will is in indifference or whether divine foreknowledge can be compatible with human free choice.¹² Though he was not the first one to defend Reformed doctrine of free choice and raise objections to Arminian doctrine

¹¹ For instance, by mentioning Edwards as an authority to allege his claims against Arminians, Augustus Toplady (1740-1778) introduces John Edwards as “the great and famous Dr. John Edwards, who flourished in the reigns of King William and Queen Anne, and was both a member of the university of Cambridge, and one of its brightest ornaments.” Augustus Toplady, *The Church of England Vindicated from the Charge of Arminianism; and the Case of Arminian Subscription particularly considered: in a Letter to the Rev. Dr. Nowell. Occasioned by Some Passages in that Gentleman’s Answer to the Author of Pietas Oxoniensis* (London: 1769), 52; George Whitefield (1714-1770) states that “I refer you to Dr. Edwards his *Veritas Redux*, which, I think is unanswerable—except in a certain point, concerning a middle sort between elect and reprobate, which he himself in effect afterwards condemns.” George Whitefield, *A Letter to the Reverend Mr. John Wesley: In Answer to Sermon, Entitled, Free-Grace* (London, 1741), 6; Mentioning Edwards as “a judicious observer” Thomas Bowman quotes Edwards’ *Veritas Redux* to point out the problem of the Arminian divines. Thomas Bowman, *A Review of the Doctrines of the Reformation, with an Account of the several Deviations to the present general Departure from them* (Norwich, 1768), 126-27; Jonathan Edwards was certainly interested in obtaining John Edwards’ works including *The Preacher*, *Veritas Redux* and *Theologia Reformata*. See Peter J. Thuesen, editor, *Catalogues of Books in The Works of Jonathan Edwards* vol. 26 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 142 (no. 129, 132), 156 (no. 204), 174 (no. 281), 227 (no. 452).

¹² The original full title is *The Arminian Doctrines Condemn’d by the Holy Scriptures, by many of the Ancient Fathers, by the Church of England, and even by the Suffrage of Right Reason. In Answer to the Rev. Daniel Whitby, D. D. Chantor of the Cathedral- Church of Sarum. Together with an Answer to his Four Discourses. To which is added an Appendix, reflecting on Mr. lightfoot’s Last Pamphlet* (London: 1711).

of free choice (many did so before him), the excellence of his arguments and the breadth of influence of his teachings on the issue made his name an authority in the debates over free choice in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries. Therefore, Edwards' doctrine of free choice is one of the ideal places to study the development of Reformed doctrine of free choice in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries and to examine the validity of previous scholarship on Reformed doctrine of free choice in general.

In spite of his importance, however, most of the modern secondary literature consists of parts of historical surveys that in just a few lines, very briefly deal with Edwards' debate with adversaries of the Reformed such as Daniel Whitby or John Locke.¹³ Moreover, in order to introduce Edwards and his debates with adversaries, they only tend to quote briefly other secondary sources without any actual analysis of Edwards' works.¹⁴ However, we see a growing interest in Edwards' life and thought among some recent scholars. Most of all, substantially introducing Edwards' arguments against John Locke in Edwards' writings, Allen Sell deals with Edwards as one of major participants in ecclesiastical dispute against John Locke in his *John Locke and the Eighteenth-Century Divines*.¹⁵ Richard A. Muller recently discusses Edwards' doctrine of

¹³ They do not deal with the content of the debates in detail. In order to introduce Edwards and his debates with Reformed adversaries, they only tend to quote briefly other secondary sources without any actual analysis of Edwards' works. For example, in his treatment of the religious debate in the late 17th and early 18th England, Redwood passes by Edwards by mentioning him briefly: "In this he stands against that pusillanimous pamphleteer of the late seventeenth century, John Edwards, who saw Socinian tendencies in the works of Locke, and against John Leland's characterization which believed that Locke had much in common with the minimal natural religion of the works of Shaftesbury, Woolaston, and Chubb." John Redwood, *Reason, Ridicule and Religion: The Age of Enlightenment in England 1660-1750* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1976), 101.

¹⁴ A couple of works deal a little more specifically with Edwards' debate with John Newton, Socinians and Arminians, but these contain little documentation of primary sources. Stephen David Snobelen, "Isaac Newton, Socinianism and 'the One Supreme God'" in *Socinianism and Arminianism: Antitrinitarians, Calvinists and Cultural Exchange in Seventeenth-Century Europe*, eds. Martin Mulrow and Jan Rohls (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 244; Nicholas Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism c. 1530-1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 326.

¹⁵ Allen Sell's *John Locke and the Eighteenth-Century Divines* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997)

the divine essence and attributes, and the Triunity of God in his Reformed Dogmatics series.¹⁶ Stephan Hampton in his *Anti-Arminians: The Anglican Reformed Tradition from Charles II to George I* also discusses various aspects of Edwards' theology such as his doctrine of God and Christology, and uses Edwards as one of the evident proofs for the persistence of the Reformed in the Church of England at the turn of the eighteenth century.¹⁷ Most notably, Dewey Wallace devotes a chapter on Edwards in his new work, *Shapers of English Calvinism, 1660-1714: Variety, Persistence, and Transformation*.¹⁸ Here, Wallace provides an overall analysis of Edwards' life, work, and thought in his social, intellectual, and cultural contexts during the era of the Restoration in quite a large amount. Indeed, these four works were the first steps to scholarship on Edwards and they significantly contributed to it by placing Edwards in his own context and by presenting detailed examinations of his primary literatures. Except these four cases, however, the secondary literature has not recognized the importance of Edwards' life, thought, and controversies with Reformed adversaries for the development of Reformed theology. Thus, considering the range of his publications and the importance of his placement in his own context, further study on Edwards still needs to be done. What is more, there is no secondary literature which deals with Edwards' view of free choice and its relation with divine necessity. Therefore, this gap needs to be filled.

In addition, as noted earlier, there is a shortage of secondary sources on Reformed understanding of human free choice in general as well as John Edwards. Reformed teaching on free choice has been given much less attention by modern scholars than other Reformed doctrines. Even though we find some recent positive scholarly works that try to

¹⁶ For Edwards' doctrine of divine essence and attributes, and his doctrine of Trinity, see Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: the Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, vol. III and IV (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2003).

¹⁷ Stephen Hampton, *Anti-Arminians: The Anglican Reformed Tradition from Charles II to George I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹⁸ Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., *Shapers of English Calvinism, 1660-1714: Variety, Persistence, and Transformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), ccxciv-cccxlvi.

fill this gap and overcome the problems of previous scholarship, they are still not enough contributions considering the broader scope and spectrum of its development in sixteenth and seventeenth century Reformed thought.¹⁹ Consequently, this lack of studies creates a gap in the understanding of how the Reformed notion of free choice developed especially in the Post-Reformation era through the debates with the Jesuits, the Arminians and the Socinians.²⁰

Besides the scarcity of studies on Edwards and the Reformed doctrine of free choice, the secondary sources both early and contemporary have largely misunderstood the Reformed doctrine of free choice and its development throughout Reformation and Post-Reformation Reformed theology. They are too numerous to mention all in this chapter. However, the common core of both old and contemporary scholarship's criticism is that Reformed thought on free choice is deterministic.²¹ A few representative citations

¹⁹ Richard A Muller, "Grace, Election, and Contingent Choice: Arminius's Gambit and the Reformed Response" in *The Grace of God: The Bondage of Will*, eds. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), pages; *Reformed Thought on Freedom: The Concept of Free Choice in the History of Early-Modern Reformed Theology*, eds. Willem J. Van Asselt, J. Martin Bac and Roelf T. te Velde (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2010); Eef Dekker, "An Ecumenical Debate between Reformation and Counter-Reformation? Bellarmine and Ames on *liberum arbitrium*," in *Reformation and Scholasticism: An Ecumenical Enterprise*, eds. W. J. van Asselt, and E. Dekker. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. 2001), 141-154; Aza Goudriaan, *Reformed Orthodoxy and Philosophy, 1625-1750: Gisbertus Voetius, Petrus van Mastricht, and Anthonius Driessen* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

²⁰ This was recognized by other adversaries of the Reformed as well. For example, Clark Pinnoch states that "It is hard to find a Calvinist theologian willing to defend Reformed theology [of divine sovereignty in relationship to the question of human freedom], including the views of both Calvin and Luther" Clark H. Pinnoch, "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology," in *The Grace of God, The Will of Man*, ed. Clark H. Pinnoch (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 26.

²¹ For example, see Brian Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969); Ernst Bizer, *Frühorthodoxie und Rationalismus* (Zurich: EVZ Verlag, 1963); George Bryson, *The Dark Side of Calvinism: The Calvinist Caste System* (Santa Ana, CA.: Calvary Chapel Publishing: 2004); A. M. Fairbairn, *Christ in Modern Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1894); Randolph S. Foster, *Objections to Calvinism as it is* (Cincinnati: Swormstedt & Poe, 1860., reprint, Salem, Ohio: Schmul Pub., 1998); Basil Hall, "Calvin Against the Calvinists," in *John Calvin*, ed. G. E. Duffield (Appleford: Sutton Courtney Press, 1966); Fisk Harris, *Calvinism Contrary to God's Word and Man's Moral Nature* (Chicago: Woman's Temperance Publishing Association, 1890); Heinrich Heppe, "Der Charakter der deutsch-reformierten Kirche und das Verhältniss derselben zum Lutherthum und zum Calvinismus," in *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, 3 (1850), 669-706; David Hunt, *A Calvinist's Honest Doubts Resolved by Reason and God's Amazing Grace* (Bend, Oregon: The Berean Call, 2002); idem, *What Love is This? Calvinism's Misrepresentation of God* (Bend, Oregon: The Berean Call, 2004); Gordon Olson, *Getting the Gospel Right: A Balanced View of Calvinism and Arminianism* (Springfield, Mo: Global Gospel Publishers, 2005); Robert E. Picirilli, *Grace, Faith, Free Will: Contrasting Views of Salvation: Calvinism*

from scholars show the widespread nature of this appraisal: Randolph S. Poster argues that since the Reformed doctrine of free choice destroys freedom of human beings, “it [Reformed understanding of free choice] involves sheer fatalism-universal necessity.”²² Norman Geisler similarly claims that Reformed theology “involves a denial of human free choice (that is, the power of contrary choice), which is supported by both Scripture and good reason...”²³ In a similar vein, associating it with “Fate of Stoicism or Kismet of Mohammedanism,” D. Miall Edwards insists that Reformed theology makes men lose their freedom and “become mere pawns in the hands of the Almighty.”²⁴ Heinrich Heppe

and *Arminianism* (Nashville, Tenn.: Randall House Publications, 2002); Alexander Schweizer, “Die Synthese des Determinismus und der Freiheit in der reformirten Dogmatik. Zur Verteidigung gegen Ebrard,” in *Theologische Jahrbücher*, 8 (1849), 153-209; Laurence M. Vance, *The Other Side of Calvinism* (Pensacola, FL: Vance Publications, 1999); William Gene Witt, “Creation, Redemption and Grace in the Theology of Jacob Arminius” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1993); *A Biblical-Theological Critique of Five-Point Calvinism: Whosoever Will*, eds. David L. Allen & Steve W. Lemke (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010); *The Grace of God, The Will of Man*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989); *Grace Unlimited*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany Fellowship, 1975).

²² Foster, *Objections to Calvinism as it is*, 166. Cf. The article on “determinisme” in *Vocabulaire Technique et Critique de la Philosophie* distinguishes between determinism and fatalism to understand the contemporary usage of determinism. It says, “Il faut d’abord éliminer le sens D [Fatalisme], qui est devenu rare, et à juste titre. Le fait qu’il respresente s’appelle déjà, sans equivoque, fatalité; et la doctrine qui admet la toute-puissance, ou du moins la grande prépondérance de la fatalité sur la volonté s’appellera naturellement fataisme. (Cet usage du mot est d’ailleurs le plus general dans la langue.)” Ibid., 214. Actually, the term, “determinism” did not exist in Edwards’ time and instead of determinism, the adversaries of the Reformed often use the term ‘Stoic Fatalism’ to criticize Reformed theology. For example, Edwards himself mentions his opponents’ usage of the terms such as “Astrological Fate” or “Fatal Necessity.” Edwards, *Arminian Doctrine Condemn’d*, 197. The article defines ‘fatalism’ as “doctrine suivant laquelle certains événements sont fixes d’avance par une puissance extérieure et supérieure à la volonté, en sorte que, quoi qu’on fasse, ils se produiront infailliblement. On dit parfois en ce sens «déterminisme externe», et on l’oppose alors au «déterminisme interne», ou liaison des causes et des effets constituant la volonté,” Ibid., 213. In spite of different nuance in the terms, however, both determinism and fatalism ultimately reach the same structural conclusion that there is no genuine contingency and only one event, entity, state of affairs or proposition can exist for each of the anterior or ulterior moments. Moreover, the modern scholars often employ both terms interchangeably without careful distinctions to criticize Reformed theology. Therefore, even though this study will prefer the term, “determinism,” it will sometime use both determinism and fatalism interchangeably to designate the idea of the previous criticism, raised by modern scholars, unless it requires the strict distinction of the different nuance of the terms. Concerning the nature of Stoic fate and the comparison of it with the Reformed doctrine of providence, See Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison Jr. (New Jersey: P & R Publishing, 1992), VI, III, III-IV.

²³ Norman Geisler, *Chosen But Free* (Minneapolis, Bethany House publishers, 1999), 47.

²⁴ D. Miall Edwards, *Christianity and Philosophy* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1932), 226. Cf. Above modern evaluations of the Reformed doctrine of free choice are not entirely new. Actually, the

claims that in Reformed teaching on the absolute will of God, “with the denial of all free self-determination of humanity, the whole human race appears as an enormous band of puppets and dolls....”²⁵ William R. Estep is also among those who argue that the Reformed theology destroys human free choice:

Second, Calvinism's God resembles Allah, the god of Islam, more than the God of grace and redeeming love revealed in Jesus Christ. Third, Calvinism robs the individual of responsibility for his/her own conduct, making a person into a puppet on a string or a robot programmed from birth to death with no will of his/her own.²⁶

At least three reasons are generally given to support this sweeping criticism. The first is the claim that the Reformed doctrines of total depravity of human beings and original sin destroy their essential function of a will (the power of contrary choice) and, thus, human liberty is totally taken away by sin. In other words, they charge that Reformed theology teaches that human persons completely lose their freedom because sin exerts a bondage of the will. For example, Emil Brunner states that Reformed theology presented “the *servum arbitrium*” (*non posse non peccare*) as the characterization of the sinner, and thus, its stress on “the *servum arbitrium*, combined with the Augustinian doctrine of Original Sin, made an opening for a wrong kind of determinism, which... cannot fail to have a devastating effect.”²⁷ He indeed understands

almost same charge had been already addressed by the adversaries of the Reformed in the eras of the Reformation and the Post Reformation. Indeed, the Jesuits, Remonstrants and Socinians argued that Reformed theology which stresses total depravity, unconditional decree and predestination, and irresistible grace denies human free choice and imply Stoic fatalism. For example, Simon Episcopius writes that “Nihil enim tam inimicum Religioni, quam fictum illud praedestinationis fatum et inevitabilis parendi ac peccandi necessitas.” Simon Episcopius, *Opera theologica* II (Amsterdam: J. Blaev, 1665), “Praefatio ad lectorem christianum,” 74. Thus, Willem van Asselt claims that “Ever since, a rather deterministic interpretation of Reformed thought seemed obvious.” Van Asselt, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 15.

²⁵ “Mit Verleugnung aller freien Selbstbestimmung des Menschen erscheint somit die Gesamtheit des menschengeschlechts als eine große Schaar Marionetten, puppen” Heppe, “Der Charakter der deutsch-reformirten Kirche,” 672.

²⁶ William R. Estep “Doctrines Lead to ‘Dunhill’ Prof Warns,” *The Founders Journal* 29 (1997), 13.

²⁷ Brunner, *Dogmatics*, 122. Brunner also writes that Augustine’s doctrine of original sin resulted in “a dangerous determinism.” Thus, Brunner urgently claims that the doctrine of human freedom should be reformulated against these deterministic metaphysics.

traditional Reformed doctrine of the *servum arbitrium*, which is “interpreted in a determinist sense,” as the indication of the complete loss of human freedom.²⁸ Referring to Calvin, Bruce R. Reichenbach insists that since classical Reformed theology teaches that “causally, the will is bound by the slavery of sin and by the directing act of God, who moves our will and deliberations wherever and however he pleases,” it results in the destruction of “the character of our desires, beliefs, and choices or the actions that follow from them.” Namely, he alleges that according to the Reformed, human beings cannot will, choose, believe, or desire other than they are causally necessitated to do.²⁹ Howard Marshall also asserts that “The typical Calvinist approach plays down the fact of human freedom... so far as the limited area of faith in God is concerned, it asserts plainly that man has no freedom, not even to respond to the grace of God; he is dead in sins and must be given the capacity to believe by God (who gives this to the elect).”³⁰

Similarly, scholars have also charged the Reformed teaching of irresistible grace of God in salvation as a denial of human freedom. For example, Geisler argues that in the Reformed doctrine of conversion, “Irresistible grace on the unwilling is a violation of free choice. For true love is persuasive but never coercive. There can be no shotgun weddings in heaven. God is not a cosmic B. F. Skinner who behaviorally modifies humans against their will.”³¹ Consequently, as Pinnock claims, “Calvinists ... leave no room at all to

²⁸ Brunner, *Dogmatics*, 122.

²⁹ Reichenbach, “Freedom, Justice, and Moral Responsibility,” 282-83. He continues that “But then the freedom asserted by Calvin and the compatibilist is an illusion, for the coercion that controls our acts when we are not free here extends to our desires and choices. When our actions are coerced, we are prevented from doing what we want, i.e., from doing anything other than it is determined that we do. When our will is coerced, we are prevented from making any choices other than it is determined that we make. We will what we must will, and cannot will or choose otherwise (unless the causal conditions be different). But the causal conditions cannot be different from what they are, for their nature and order is part of God’s predetermined plan.” Ibid., 283.

³⁰ Howard Marshall, “Predestination in the New Testament,” in *Grace Unlimited* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany Fellowship, 1975), 134.

³¹ Norman Geisler, “God Knows All Things” in *Predestination and Free Will*, eds. David Basinger and Randall Basinger (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986), 68. He also comments that “unresistable grace is coercion.” Geisler, *Chosen But Free*, 48-49. See also Norman L. Geisler, “Human Destiny: Free or

permit any recognition of human freedom in the salvation event,” the critics insist that classical Reformed theology ignores human freedom in the work of salvation.³²

A second reason given by the critics of Reformed doctrine of free choice is related to the Reformed doctrine of infallible divine foreknowledge. Critics of Reformed theology argue that the Reformed doctrine of foreknowledge leads to fatalism because if God infallibly knows the entire future, then it looks as if nothing can happen differently than it does. If so, and if human freedom requires the ability of the will to choose or do otherwise, it appears that human beings do not have freedom of choice by the will.

William L. Craig best expresses this critique stating that according to the teachings of the traditional Reformed thinkers, “in virtue of God’s prescience and providence, everything that occurs in the world does so necessarily.... the will is not free to choose other than as it does.”³³ Richard Rice argues against the Reformed doctrine of foreknowledge that “In spite of assertions that absolute foreknowledge does not eliminate freedom, intuition tells us otherwise. If God’s foreknowledge is infallible, then what he sees cannot fail.... And if the future is inevitable, then the apparent experience of free choice is an illusion.”³⁴ Thus, he concludes that “Calvinists affirm absolute divine foreknowledge on the basis of predestination, a concept that excludes genuine creaturely freedom.”³⁵ David Hunt similarly claims that “If God knows what every person will

Forced?” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 9. no. 2 (1979), 99-100.

³² Pinnock, “From Augustine to Arminius,” 21.

³³ William L. Craig, “Middle Knowledge, A Calvinist-Arminian Rapprochement?” in *The Grace of God, The Will of Man*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 144. He also associates classical Reformed understanding of divine foreknowledge with “the theological determinism.” William Lane Craig, “A Middle Knowledge Response,” in *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views*, eds. James k. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001), 58-59.

³⁴ Richard Rice, “Divine Foreknowledge and Free-Will Theism,” in *The Grace of God, The Will of Man*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 127.

³⁵ Rice, “Divine Foreknowledge and Free-Will Theism,” 131. In contrast, in favor of Arminianism, he writes that “traditional Arminians affirm both absolute divine foreknowledge and creaturely freedom and strive to demonstrate their compatibility.” Ibid. cf. H. Orton Wiley similarly insists that the traditional Reformed doctrine of divine foreknowledge leads to deny a knowledge of future contingent event. “The

think or do, and if nothing can prevent what God foreknows from happening, then how can man be a free moral agent?”³⁶ Cottrell particularly points out that the origin of error in the matter of divine foreknowledge is ascribed to Calvinists’ “wrongly equating it [the concept of certainty] with necessity.”³⁷ Pinnock consequently holds that “There is no room for the kind of freedom the Bible speaks of if there is a God who knows and/or controls all things....”³⁸

The third reason is connected to the assessment above: the Reformed doctrine of divine decree, predestination, and providence threatens to lead to determinism because if everything occurs under the control of the divine will, then apparently everything happens the way God determines it and it looks as if humans lack the power to act differently. If so, humans are not free any longer. H. Ray Dunning expresses this myth most bluntly as follows:

A deterministic worldview, whether philosophical or theological, avoids the question [of evil] but abandons any meaningful personal dimension in God’s relation to the world. If men are pawns that ... the Sovereign Chessmaster moves in a unilateral, even capricious, way, the personal character of the divine-human relation is effectively eliminated.³⁹

Jack W. Cottrell also argues that “consistent Calvinism is a genuine determinism....

This determinism is inherent in the doctrine that is the most significant embodiment of divine sovereignty for consistent and inconsistent Calvinists alike, namely, God’s eternal

Calvinistic position identifies foreknowledge and foreordination, maintaining that the divine decrees are the ground for the occurrence of all events, including the voluntary action of men. On this theory, foreknowledge depends upon the certainty of the decrees, and is not strictly a knowledge of contingent event.” H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology* vol. 1 (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press, 1959), 357-58.

³⁶ Hunt, *What Love Is This?*, 160.

³⁷ Cottrell, “The Classic Arminian View of Election,” 111.

³⁸ Clark Pinnock, “God Limits His Knowledge,” in *Predestination and Free Will*, eds. David Basinger and Randall Basinger (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986), 151. David R. Griffin, *God, Power, and Evil: A Process Theodicy* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976).

³⁹ H. Ray Dunning, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness: A Wesleyan Systematic Theology* (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press, 1988), 257-58.

decree (purpose, plan, or will).”⁴⁰ That is, according to him, classical Calvinists “ascribe to the divine decree the same attributes characteristic of determinism, namely, unconditionality and efficacy.”⁴¹

Reichenbach associates the Reformed doctrine of predestination with “a divine determination of all human actions.”⁴² Geisler insists that since the Reformed doctrine of predestination teaches that men possess no choice in their own salvation, “it involves a denial of free choice.”⁴³ Pinnock claims that divine predestination and human freedom cannot be compatible:

With regard to predestination, if a person believed that the concept of the divine plan and purpose entailed a smothering determinism in which everything that occurs takes place because God has decreed that it should, he would have to conclude that those that are saved and those that are lost are so as the result of God’s ordination, and that the glorious message of God’s free grace for all sinners is fundamentally misleading.”⁴⁴

Thus, he criticizes the “classical Calvinism’s” view of predestination as follows:

⁴⁰ Jack W. Cottrell, “The Nature of the Divine Sovereignty,” in *The Grace of God, The Will of Man*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 98. He continues to say that “When all of these factors are taken together-i.e., when the eternal and comprehensive decree is also said to be efficacious and unconditional-the only possible result is a theistic determinism. Consistent Calvinists acknowledge this and accept its implications, even to the point of denying human free will.” Ibid., 99.

⁴¹ Cottrell, “The Nature of the Divine Sovereignty,” 100. See also Jack W. Cottrell, “The Classic Arminian View of Election,” in *Perspective on Election, Five Views*, ed. Chad Owen Brand (Nashville, B & H Publishing, 2006), 104-05; Evans writes that “the type of sovereignty proposed by strong Calvinism... is a causal account of human willing and acting...” Jeremy A. Evans, “Reflection on Determinism and Human Freedom,” in *A Biblical- Theological Critique of Five-Point Calvinism: Whosoever Will*, eds. David L. Allen & Steve W. Lemke (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010), 267. On this deterministic interpretation, modern scholars also often identify Reformed theology with Stoicism or Fatalism. For example, Fairbairn states that “Calvinism is Stoicism baptized into Christianity, but renewed and exalted by the baptism. It has the fortitude of Stoicism, the quality that enables men to bend without being broken, to submit without being conquered.” Andrew Martin Fairbairn, *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1894), 145; Faulkner associates Calvinism with omnipotent fatalistic power. William Faulkner, *Light in August* (New York: Modern Library, 1932, 1968), xii and passim.

⁴² Reichenbach, “Freedom, Justice, and Moral Responsibility,” 291.

⁴³ Geisler, “God Knows All Things,” 68.

⁴⁴ Clark H. Pinnock, “Introduction,” in *Grace Unlimited*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany Fellowship, 1975), 16.

Such a notion, indistinguishable from fatalism, is inconsistent with human freedom and undermines the reality of history and man's moral responsibility. Worse still, it makes God the author of sin, since every act of rebellion. Including the fall of Adam and since then was, as very event is, ordained in the secret counsels of God. It is with no small relief that we inform our readers of our conviction that Scripture teaches no such doctrine."⁴⁵

Explaining that "Causal determinism is a specific type of necessity that argues that the choices made by a person are determined by his particular make-up and his given setting... so he does not have the ability to choose otherwise," Kenneth D. Keathley insists that the traditional Reformed view of providence "embraces causal determinism."⁴⁶ Roger Olson claims that "Calvinists believe God's control over human history is always already *de facto*-fully accomplished in a detailed and deterministic sense...."⁴⁷

In particular, the critics have charged that the Reformed doctrine of divine providence makes God the author of sin because if everything occurs under the control of the divine will, then apparently even human sin happens the way God determines it and it looks as if man cannot avoid it. For example, mentioning Calvin as such an example, Pinnock maintains that the Reformed emphasis of the absolute sovereignty of God in respect of sin and the fall makes God "the author of a great evil."⁴⁸ Criticizing the classical Reformed understanding of sovereignty in relationship to the question of evil,

⁴⁵ Pinnock, "Introduction," 17.

⁴⁶ Kenneth Keathley, *Salvation and Sovereignty: A Molinist Approach* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010), 8. He also states that two main tenets of Reformed theology are "(1) God's perfections and infinite attributes require that all events and choices are understood in terms of necessity, and that (2) God's sovereignty and/or man's depravity require that all choices, decisions, and actions are understood in terms of causal determinism." Ibid.

⁴⁷ Roger E. Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2006), 117. In contrast, Olson claims that "Arminians (and some other Christians) believe God's control over human history is always already *de jure*-by light and power if not already completely exercised-but at present only partially *de facto*. God can and does exercise control, but not to the exclusion of human liberty and not in such a way as to make him the author of sin and evil." Ibid.

⁴⁸ Clark H. Pinnock, "Divine Election as Corporate, Open, and Vocational," in Brand, Chad Owen, Eds. *Perspectives on Election: 5 Views* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2006), 283-284. He also writes that "The logic of consistent Calvinism makes God the author of evil and casts serious doubt on his goodness." Clark H. Pinnock, "From Augustine to Arminius," 21.

Bruce A. Little asserts that “The logical end of the Calvinist position on the question of sovereignty leads to a strong form of determinism, which is not the necessary outcome of biblical sovereignty. In addition, moral responsibility for sin must find its final causal agent to be God.”⁴⁹ In a similar vein, Roger Olson argues as follows:

The point is that deniers of free will theism must explain the existence of sin and evil in the world; divine determinism ultimately has to trace it back to God. In some way, directly or indirectly, God willed it and rendered it certain. But how does that escape making God the author of sin and evil? Most Christian divine determinists (e.g., classical Calvinists and many Lutherans) flinch at this point. They cannot bring themselves to say that God is the author of sin and evil. But if these are not part of creation itself (in which case God would still be responsible for them as he is the Creator of everything), how did they enter it or arise within it? Ultimately, divine determinism, the only viable alternative to belief in free will within a theistic worldview, cannot get God off the hook. If God is the all-determining reality and people do not have libertarian free will, God is the Creator or author of sin and evil including the very first inclination to evil within a creature’s mind or heart.⁵⁰

James Daane takes a similar approach to explain the cause of sin:

Viewed from the perspective of decretal theology, each event of history is willed by God, is related vertically to the divine determination, and is revelatory of the divine glory. This is God’s sovereignty. Theologians in this tradition urge that God is the ultimate cause and the primary source of sin, that the function of the proclamation of the gospel is to make some men ripe for judgment; that God created sin. . . ; that God takes pleasure in the death of sinners; that preaching is per se a curse for the reprobate; that everything that occurs is a divine wish-fulfillment, for if anything were to occur contrary to what God wills, God would not be sovereign but a godling who had created more world than he can take care of⁵¹

⁴⁹ Bruce A. Little, “Evil and God’s Sovereignty,” in *A Biblical-Theological Critique of Five-Point Calvinism: Whosoever Will*, eds. David L. Allen & Steve W. Lemke (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010), 296. More specifically, he states that if his critique of the Reformed understanding of the relation between God’s sovereignty and evil, “God is both causally and morally responsible for 9/11, the drunk murdering his family, and the rape and torturous death of Jessica.” Ibid., 297-98. “Since God ordained the particular act, God also must have ordained the pedophile to act.” “If the rape is ordained, then so is the rapist ordained to act.” Ibid., 280.

⁵⁰ Roger E. Olson, “The Classical Free Will Theist Model of God,” in *Perspectives on the Doctrine of God: 4 Views*, ed. Bruce A. Ware (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2008), 160. He also comments that “it [the Reformed definition of divine sovereignty] cannot avoid making God the author of sin and evil...” Olson, *Arminian Theology*, 119.

⁵¹ James Daane, *The Freedom of God: A Study of Election and Pulpit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 78-79. He thus excoriates the classic Reformed position of divine decree as “How pervasively this view has penetrated and shaped Reformed theology! Here is the theological bottomland from which has arisen what is often regarded as the correct Reformed understanding of God’s immutability and of

In sum, modern critics insist that traditional Reformed doctrine of total depravity and sovereign grace of God, divine foreknowledge, providence, and predestination leads to the deterministic conclusion that humans do not have freedom of choice by the will.⁵² Nevertheless, such deterministic interpretation of classical Reformed position on the issue is not the exclusive property of the critics of the Reformed. Ironically, some modern scholars who identify themselves as Calvinist also understand Reformed doctrine of free choice and its relation with divine sovereignty within the framework of determinism. For instance, John Feinberg, a key advocate of the modern Calvinistic concept of human freedom, argues that according to the classical Reformed doctrine of divine decree, if an event is decreed by God, that event must necessarily occur. Nevertheless, he argues that this divine determinism can be compatible with human freedom as long as one's will is not compelled to choose in a particular way.⁵³ He states as follows:

sovereignty. Here is the source of the assertion that God is the cause and source of sin, yet not responsible for it. Here is the root of an unconditional theology that not only rightly rejects Arminian theology {although with wrongly formulated reasons} but which also insists that God is so imperturbable that he is not free to be moved with compassion for the plight of man. Here is the origin of the position that reprobation is ultimately not an act of divine justice in response to sin, but something that has its ground in God himself. Here arises Reformed theology's tendency to cast a threatening shadow over all reality." Ibid., 160.

⁵² Concerning this tendency, Anthon Vos comments that "The traditional assessment rests on the conclusion that the old scholastic type of reformed theology was a philosophical determinism." Anthon Vos, "Scholasticism and Reformation," in *Reformation and Scholasticism: An Ecumenical Enterprise*, eds. W. J. Van Asselt, and E. Dekker (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 115. However, Muller firmly argues that "There is not even a tendency toward metaphysical determinism: when we enter the world of seventeenth-century theological debate, it is the purportedly predestinarian Reformed who take up the defense of human free choice and secondary causality against the more deterministic tendencies of Cartesian metaphysics, specifically the occasionalist conclusion, resting on a conception of necessary divine concursus, that God is the sole cause of all motion in the universe." Muller, *PRRD* I, 128-29.

⁵³ John Feinberg, "God Ordains All Things," in *Predestination and Free Will: Four Views of Divine Sovereignty & Human Freedom*, eds David, Basinger and Randall Basinger (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 19-43. cf. Modern scholars often use the modern philosophical categories to discuss the nature of human freedom in relation to divine sovereignty: hard determinism, libertarian freedom and soft determinism (also often called compatibilism). Cf. Richard Taylor, *Metaphysics*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1992), 35-53; William Hasker, *Metaphysics* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1983), 29-55. Upon the presupposition that the traditional Reformed doctrine of divine sovereignty results in determinism, they attempt to squeeze the Reformed theology into either hard determinism or soft determinism. However, whether it is hard or soft, their basic assumption that God's decree and foreknowledge cannot avoid determinism or man's action is causally determined by God's decree and foreknowledge applies to the both cases. In this distinction, so-called, modern Calvinists such as John Feinberg are classified into soft determinism which argues that determinism is indeed compatible with

This view of God's sovereignty fits nicely with compatibilism. Since God's decree covers all things, it must include both the ends God envisions as well as the means to such ends. God includes whatever means are necessary to accomplish his ends in a way that avoids constraining the agent to do what is decreed. Human actions are thus causally determined but free.⁵⁴

Simply put, his understanding of Calvinism is that even though creatures cannot do otherwise than they do, there is freedom because they are happily content to do it. Thus, Feinberg reaches the argument that "Calvinists as determinists must either reject freedom altogether or accept compatibilism."⁵⁵

In spite of these old and modern caricatures of Reformed doctrine of free choice as determinism, as already noted briefly, a group of new scholars recently began to challenge the traditional assessment of Reformed doctrine of free choice. At least three works should gain a particular attention as such examples: Richard A Muller, in his article, "Grace, Election, and Contingent Choice: Arminius's Gambit and the Reformed Response," deals with the historical myth that the classic Reformed theology leads to metaphysical determinism. Quite the contrary to the charge, by analyzing the teachings of the major Reformed thinkers and confessions, Muller shows that the Reformed view of

human free choice and this is why they are often referred to as compatibilism. However, as it will be shown in the subsequent chapters of this study, since Edwards' and other Reformed thinker's doctrine of free choice and its relation with divine sovereignty does not equate divine sovereignty with determinism or does not deny any contingency, their position does not match either hard or soft determinism at all. Thus, such categories are not relevant at all to explain Edwards and other Reformed thinkers' doctrine of free choice. Modern Calvinists such as John Feinberg, however, fit into the category of soft determinism because they also understand divine sovereignty as determinism, even though they try to maintain human freedom. Cf. John Feinberg states that "Calvinists are usually deterministic." John S. Feinberg, "God Ordains All Things," 20.

⁵⁴ Feinberg, "God Ordains All Things," 29.

⁵⁵ John S. Feinberg, "God, Freedom and Evil in Calvinist Thinking," in *The Grace of God, the Bondage of the Will*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 2:465. Cf. John S. Feinberg, *The Many Faces of Evil* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 98. Some contemporary evangelicals' understanding of the relation between divine decree and human freedom is very similar to Feinberg's view of the issue. For instance, Carl F. H. Henry argues that "God foreordains the entire course of world and human events." For him, however, this does not eliminate freedom because human beings still have "rational self-determination." "To be morally responsible," Henry asserts, "man needs only the capacity for choice, not the freedom of contrary choice." Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, vol. 6 (Waco: Word, 1983), 84-85.

divine sovereignty and grace neither denies human free choice and future contingents nor undermines human responsibility.⁵⁶

Most notably, van Asselt and a few others have recently produced a major and well analyzed work on Reformed doctrine of free choice. This work provides a translation and commentary of six texts on free choice of nearly forgotten but highly significant Protestant Orthodox thinkers (Girolamo Zanchi, Franciscus Junius, Franciscus Gomarus, Gisbertus Voetius, Francis Turretin, and Bernardinus de Moor) including a helpful clarification and account of some crucial scholastic terms and methods. In so doing, this work particularly overcomes the methodological flaws of previous scholarship on the issue by examining their writings in their own terms and context through a close reading of their original text. Moreover, this work significantly contributes to the scholarship on Reformed doctrine of free choice by showing that previous scholars' evaluation of the Reformed doctrine of free choice as determinism does not quite fit the cases of these six Reformed figures.⁵⁷

Even though it does not focus on the Reformed doctrine of free choice itself, Aza Goudriaan's *Reformed Orthodoxy and Philosophy, 1625-1750* also devotes one section to the Reformed understanding of human freedom and its relation with divine determination through a detailed analysis of Gisbertus Voetius, Petrus van Mastricht (1630-1706), and Anthonius Driessen (1684-1748). Here, Goudriaan shows in detail how these Reformed figures attempt to maintain the balance between the freedom of human will and divine decree or providence without causing metaphysical determinism or making God the

⁵⁶ Richard A. Muller, "Grace, Election, and Contingent Choice: Arminius's Gambit and the Reformed Response" in *The Grace of God: The Bondage of Will*, eds. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995)

⁵⁷ Van Asselt, Willem J. J. Martin Bac and Roelf T. te Velde, eds. *Reformed Thought on Freedom: The Concept of Free Choice in the History of Early-Modern Reformed Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2010.

author of sin, although he does not directly engage in the debate with previous modern scholarship.⁵⁸

Basically standing in agreement with the new scholarship on the classical Reformed doctrine of free choice in relationship to divine sovereignty, this essay will also attempt to examine whether the traditional assessment of Reformed doctrine of free choice is accurate or not. It will show that the arguments of the conventional scholarship do not fit into the case of Edwards at all. That is, Edwards' work so completely defies the traditional assessment of Reformed doctrine of free choice as to call into question the validity of the conventional scholarship on this issue. Therefore, it will argue that the reading of Edwards points toward the need for a broader reassessment of Reformed understanding of free choice in the Reformation and Post-Reformation eras.

IV. The Prospectus of the Research

1. Source Material

In order to fill the gap, I plan to investigate the writings of John Edwards that pertain to the doctrine of free choice. Three main treatises of Edwards will be key to this. Edwards's first major treatment of the subject, and most substantial, is *The Arminian Doctrines Condemn'd by the Holy Scriptures, By Many of Ancient Fathers, By the Church of England, And even by the Suffrage of Right Reason* (1711). This treatise has an extensive constructive section on free choice, laying out a massive series of arguments for the Reformed doctrine of free choice, as well as a thorough refutation of the Arminian position advocated by Daniel Whitby. His second major piece is seen in *Veritas Redux* (1707) as he exposes Reformed doctrines in detail, such as God's eternal decree, the

⁵⁸ Eef Dekker's "An Ecumenical Debate between Reformation and Counter-Reformation? Bellarmine and Ames on *liberum arbitrium*" can be regarded as another contribution to the scholarship on the Reformed doctrine of free choice because it provides an actual examination of an orthodox figure's doctrine of free choice. However, without dealing with the issue of previous scholarship's appraisal of the issue, it is aimed to present a brief comparison of two figures' differences in the concept of free choice, the relationship between intellect and will, and the issue of divine *concursus* and human freedom.

liberty of man's free will, and grace and conversion. Edwards' other major contribution related to free choice is *Theologia Reformata: The Body and Substance of the Christian Religion, comprised in distinct Discourses or Treatises upon The Apostles Creed, The Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments* (1713). This work includes Edwards' systematic presentations of divine providence, foreknowledge, and grace, plus an extensive theological analysis of the subject of the freedom of the will.

These three works provide an abundant amount of material on free choice, in which he addressed the doctrine exegetically, systematically, polemically, and practically. This being said, Edwards wrote things that pertain to and illuminate his understanding of free choice outside of these main works. Therefore, the whole corpus of his writings will be researched to give a fuller and more informed understanding of the issues involved. In addition, in order to show how Edwards expresses the full fruits of Reformed reflection on free choice, significant interaction with other Reformed writings that touch on free choice will be necessary. These works are important to set a backdrop and demonstrate the trajectory of Edwards' teachings within his tradition.

2. Goal and Methodology of the Research

The main purpose of this study is first to contribute to an understanding of Edwards' doctrine of free choice, as an illustration of the way Reformed theologians of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries developed their ideas of human free choice, and second to offer an evaluation regarding the validity of previous scholarship pertaining to Reformed teaching on free choice in general. In order to obtain an accurate and sufficient understanding of Edwards' doctrine of free choice and examine the validity of the conventional scholarship, this study will (1) provide a detailed analysis of Edwards' texts, (2) follow Edwards' own arguments for a fair interpretation of his thought, and (3) examine Edwards' work in his own intellectual context of the seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries.

In so doing, Edwards' point of view will be analyzed exegetically as well as theologically in part II of this study (chapter 3-7). The general pattern and sequence of the presentation of the analysis of Edwards' thought for each chapter is as follows: First, Edwards' theological and philosophical arguments supporting his view will be analyzed in each chapter. In this part, mention will be made of Edwards' view of the doctrine of free choice and its related issues in his systematic argumentation. It looks at his distinctions and definitions, his theological and philosophical arguments, and the significance of his systematic conclusions.

Next, Edwards' exegetical arguments will be analyzed. More specifically, looking at things like his refutation of the adversaries' interpretation of scriptures, his use of exegesis of scriptures to support his arguments, and the significance of his exegetical conclusions will reveal more clearly how Edwards advocates his Reformed doctrine of free choice and refutes his opponents' view on this.

Besides exegetical and theological argument, Edwards' use of Church Fathers will be carefully studied as his major methodology to argue against his opponents. Edwards' use of Church Fathers is important because his main opponent, Whitby, heavily relies on Church Fathers to support his Arminian view of free choice. Edwards, however, points out the problems of Whitby's interpretation of Church Fathers and he himself uses diverse Church Fathers such as Augustine, Jerome, and Chrysostom to support his claims and to repudiate Arminian view of free choice. Edwards' use of Church Fathers will serve to highlight his distinctive context in his debate with his opponents concerning the doctrine of free choice.

In addition, in the analysis of Edwards' exegetical and theological arguments, and his use of Church Fathers, whenever it is necessary, this essay will attempt to compare Edwards' ideas with those of some major figures of the Reformed tradition, who significantly contributed to the development of the Reformed doctrine of free choice, not only as his predecessors, but also as his contemporaries, (for example, Jerome Zanchi,

Francis Turretin, Gisbertus Voetius, Franz Burman, Abraham Heidanus and so on) through their writings. Comparing Edwards with his Reformed predecessors, contemporaries and even his opponents helps to show how Edwards stands as a continuing expression of the Reformed tradition, and highlights his major arguments concerning how free choice and divine necessity can be compatible.

Finally, except chapter 3, the analysis of Edwards' doctrine of free choice and its comparison with those of others will eventually confronts the conventional scholarship on the issue in each chapter and show that the previous deterministic interpretation of Reformed thought on free choice does not fit the case of Edwards' doctrine of free choice and its relation with divine sovereignty. Regarding the method of this study, however, two things need to be noted: (1) it will basically limit its discussion to Edwards' thought on free choice and its relation with divine necessity without presenting a complete picture of his view of foreknowledge, providence, predestination, and grace; the present researcher will focus on exploring aspects and themes of these doctrines that merit examining in order to achieve the goal of this study. And (2), only as necessary, this study will attempt to compare his ideas with those of preceding and contemporary theologians. Thus in no case will the present researcher do full justice to the range of their thinking, only calling attention to certain salient motifs.

3. Division of the Subject Matter

Having now introduced the source, aim and method of this study, a general outline will show the progression of the project. This study is divided into eight chapters, including this introduction and conclusion. In chapter 2, this dissertation will survey the historical context of John Edwards's teachings on free choice. Namely, in order to place Edwards in his own intellectual context, it will investigate the overall status of protestant scholasticism in the late 17th and early 18th century and specifically that of the Anglican Reformed tradition after the Restoration. In doing so, chapter 2 will look at the Arminian

controversies that occurred in England in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries. In particular, it will focus on examining the controversy started in the 1710s between the Arminian Daniel Whitby and John Edwards. This more narrow scope serves to place John Edwards in his own context and introduces him as a significant defender of the Reformed tradition.

Once Edwards has been put in his own context, the next part of the dissertation (chapter 3 to 7) will examine in detail how Edwards deals with controversial issues such as the nature of free will, the relation between human freedom and divine foreknowledge, the cause of sin, providence, and predestination. In chapter 3, we will make a detailed review of Edwards' understanding of the nature and definition of free choice. We will discuss his view of free choice particularly through his analysis of the various modes of free choice according to the different states in the history of salvation: before and after the fall, after regeneration, and in glory.

Chapter 4 will provide an overall survey of Edwards' understanding of divine decree and predestination, focusing on his view of their relation with human freedom. This analysis will show that in Edwards' understanding, God's decree and predestination does not exclude human free choice at all, rather they can be reconciled in a certain way with it, and consequently, Edwards' teachings on the relation between the necessity of God's decree and the freedom of human actions does not result in metaphysical or philosophical determinism.

In chapter 5, we will examine Edwards' doctrine of divine foreknowledge and its relation with human freedom. It will especially deal with three issues, raised by Edwards' debates with his adversaries, whether God can infallibly know future contingent events without destroying human freedom, whether divine knowledge of future contingency lying outside of divine willing exists, and whether God's decree depends on His foreknowledge of future contingencies or not. In so doing, this chapter will prove that unlike the common charge against the traditional Reformed theology, in

Edwards' thought, human freedom or future contingency is still maintained in spite of the infallible foreknowledge of God.

Chapter 6 will handle Edwards' doctrine of divine providence. Here, in order to resolve the matter between God's determination and human freedom, it will particularly discuss two main issues which arose in Edwards' controversy with Whitby: whether God willed the sin of mankind from eternity and whether God is the author of sin. Through the analysis of Edwards' discussion of these issues, it will show that Edwards' doctrine of divine providence disproves the previous scholarship's argument that Reformed teaching of providence makes human beings a senseless stone or tree trunk. Likewise, the study of Edwards' discussion of divine providence will also demonstrate that the old scholarship's accusation that Reformed doctrine of providence and sin make God the author of sin does not apply to the case of Edwards at all.

In chapter 7, we will discuss Edwards' doctrine of divine grace and conversion focusing on his view of the roles of divine grace and human free choice in the work of conversion. In doing so, this chapter will reveal that modern scholarship's charge that the Reformed doctrine of conversion denies human freedom does not fit the case of Edwards at all. Rather, it will prove that in Edwards' understanding, human freedom and contingency are still preserved in spite of the total depravity of mankind and irresistible grace of God.

Chapter 8 concludes the essay by drawing some of the principal themes together. Edwards' main idea in previous chapters will be briefly restated and final comments on comparisons between the thought of Edwards and his Reformed brethren regarding the issue will be presented. Finally, the results of my research call for a significant reassessment of how interpreters ought to view the classical Reformed doctrine of free choice and its relation with divine necessity.

V. Edwards' Life and Survey of His Works

1. Brief Sketch of Edwards' Life

John Edwards was a divine of the Church of England and a faithful Reformed theologian in the late 17th and the early 18th century.⁵⁹ He was born at Hertford in 1637 as the second son of Thomas Edwards (1599-1647) who was a militant Presbyterian nonconformist and one of the most renowned polemical writers of his time. The young Edwards entered St. John's College in Cambridge in 1653 and studied under the government of Anthony Tuckney (1599-1670), who was once the chairman of the committee of the Westminster Assembly in 1643 and played a significant role in drafting its section on the Decalogue in the *Westminster Larger Catechism*.⁶⁰

Awarded a B.A. in 1658, Edwards was chosen as a fellow of St. John's in 1659 and received a M.A. in 1661. Ordained both deacon and priest in 1662, Edwards was soon called to preach at Trinity Church, Cambridge in 1664 and gained a reputation as an excellent preacher among the people.⁶¹ Devoting himself entirely to the edification and comfort of the parishioners of Trinity church during an outbreak of the plague in 1665, he came back to St John's College and received a B.D. degree in 1668. About the same time,

⁵⁹ Considering the span of Edwards' life, the second phase of High orthodoxy largely corresponds with the main context of Edwards' career. Concerning the feature of this period, see Muller, *PRRD* I, 30-32; 80. Even though Reformed theology had been more pervasive and influential among the Puritans and thus it is "often associated with those designated Dissenters, the descendants of the earlier Puritan nonconformists," in the established church, there were still many Anglican theologians who belonged to the Reformed tradition. John Edwards was one such example. Wallace, "Edwards," xxxiv-xxxv. On the distinctive nature of the Reformed tradition within the established church, see Hampton, *Anti Arminians*, and Wallace, "Edwards." This status of the Reformed theology within the Church of England after Restoration will be discussed in the following chapter.

⁶⁰ "Edwards," *Britannica*, 543. Robinson, "Edwards," 937-38.

⁶¹ Concerning this, "In his preaching he affected not any flaunting eloquence, but studied to be plain, intelligible, and practical, and to edify all his hearers; yet so as that his Discourses were mixed with choice and uncommon remarks. His church was much frequented by the gown, and by persons of considerable standing in the University. Dr. Sparrow, Master of Queen's, Dr. Beaumont, Master of Peter House, Dr. Pearson, Master of Trinity College were often heard to applaud his pulpit performances." "Edwards," *Britannica*, 543.

Edwards was appointed lecturer in Bury St. Edmunds. Yet, he resigned this position only after a period of twelve months and soon returned to his college at Cambridge in 1669.⁶²

However, his situation at Cambridge was uneasy for Edwards. Edwards' Reformed theology caused conflicts with Tuckney's successor at St John's, Peter Gunning (1614-1684), who became bishop of Chichester in 1669 and Francis Turner (1637-1700), Gunning's successor at St John's, and this growing friction between Edwards and them subsequently led him to resign his St John's College fellowship. Nevertheless, before long Edwards was invited as a parish incumbent at St. Sepulchre's, Cambridge and resumed his career as a prominent preacher in 1670.⁶³

In 1683, Edwards accepted the call from St. Peter's Church in Colchester. However, due to ill health of both him and his wife and "unkind usage" from the clergy of the town, he retired from the pulpit in 1686 and, by way of a short settlement in a Cambridgeshire village, his family finally returned to Cambridge in 1697.⁶⁴ After a period of two years, he was awarded Doctor of Divinity by Cambridge University. However, his health did not improve and consequently, Edwards determined to devote the rest of his life to study and to diffuse thence his theological ideas via the press. Accordingly, from the late 1680s until his death in 1716, he produced numerous theological works both positive and polemical.⁶⁵

⁶² "Edwards," *Britannica*, 544; Robinson, "Edwards," 937-38. Even though he quit the position soon, *Britannica* writes that he discharged his office "with great reputation and acceptance." "Edwards," *Britannica*, 544.

⁶³ "Edwards," *Britannica*, 544; Robinson, "Edwards," 938. cf. "... his sermons there were as much attended by persons of consequence in the University as they had formerly been at Trinity Church." "Edwards," *Britannica*, 544.

⁶⁴ "Edwards," *Britannica*, 544. Regarding the reason why Edwards moved back to Cambridge, *Britannica* state that "He moved to Cambridge, both for the convenience of the market and the University-library." It writes that "In spite of his numerous publications, he never possessed a library except some Bibles, lexicons, dictionaries, and other works, of a similar nature and constant use" and "The University and College Libraries furnished him with all the classic Authors, and Greek and Latin fathers, and indeed with whatever related to ancient learning." *Ibid.*, 544-45.

⁶⁵ "Edwards," *Britannica*, 544.

2. Brief Overview of Edwards' Writings

In order to grasp an overall picture of Edwards' life and thought, it is worthwhile to briefly sketch his publishing activity at this stage of this study, even though it will not attempt to do exhaustive research on his writings.⁶⁶ Edwards was a prolific writer throughout his career.⁶⁷ The scope and genre of his publications are wide and various, respectively.⁶⁸ Regarding this, Wallace states that "When all is said and done, his books are interesting, and when the scope of his whole project as an author is grasped, one is impressed by the range of his writings and the consistency of its central themes."⁶⁹ However, Edwards' writings gain attention not just because of the range of productivity. Edwards was actually well known not only for his productive theological writings but also for his staunch defense of Reformed orthodoxy through his voluminous works during his time. Thus, Wallace highly respects Edwards as a representative figure who attempts to defend Reformed theology through his eminent writings at the turn of the eighteenth century:

At a critical time when it seemed necessary to concentrate on defense, Edwards undertook nothing less than a grand restatement and defense of the Christian faith in its Calvinist version, beginning with an expression of its heartfelt piety and then moving on to epistemological and apologetic labors to establish a preface and groundwork for major works of biblical exegesis, doctrinal controversy, systematic theology, and practical/pastoral theology. His work has a kind of unity, given it partly by the opponents whom he undertook to refute. The seriousness, erudition, and even judiciousness of what he wrote is impressive, and he stands as a representative

⁶⁶ Britannica's biography includes a complete list of Edwards' publications. For the more detailed study on Edwards' writings, see Wallace, "Edwards."

⁶⁷ Especially, from the late 1680s, he published numerous books. Tyacke writes that "Most of Edwards' published Calvinist writing dates from after the turn of the century, although it was clearly in gestation during the previous decades." Nicholas Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism c. 1530-1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 326.

⁶⁸ Only two of Edwards' works, *Some Thoughts Concerning the Several Causes and Occasions of Atheism* (London: 1695) and *Socinianism unmask'd* (London: 1696) are republished in one volume by a modern publisher: John Edwards, *Some Thoughts Concerning ... Atheism and Socinianism Unmask'd* (Garland publishing, Inc.: New York and London, 1984)

⁶⁹ Wallace, "Edwards," cccxlv.

and transitional figure of English Calvinism between the older Church of England and Puritan Calvinism on the one hand and the newer evangelical Calvinism of the British awakenings on the other.⁷⁰

Among many works, his polemical works deserve our attention first. Since he was young, he actively engaged in debates with the adversaries of the Reformed and he did it mainly through his pen.⁷¹ Hence, Edwards published many polemic works. For example, he wrote against the Socinians and John Locke, *Socinianism Unmasked* (London: 1696), *The Socinian Creed, Or a Brief Account of the professed Tenents and Doctrines of the Foreign and English Socinians*, (London: 1697) and *A Brief Vindication of the Fundamental Articles of the Christian Faith* (London: 1697).⁷²

Five works which grew out of his debate with the deists and the atheists are noteworthy as well: *A Discourse Concerning the Authority, Stile, and Perfection of the Books of the Old and New-Testament* (London: 1693), *A Compleat History or Survey of all the Dispensations and Methods of Religion, From the beginning of the World . . . as represented in the Old and New Testament . . . In which also . . . the Certainty of the Christian Religion [is] demonstrated, against the Cavils of the Deists*, 2 vols. (London: 1699), *A Free Discourse concerning Truth and Error, Especially in Matters of Religion* (London: 1701), *Some Thoughts concerning the Several Causes and Occasions of Atheism, Especially in the Present Age* (London: 1695)⁷³ and *A Demonstration of the Existence and Providence of God* (1696).

⁷⁰ Wallace, “Edwards,” cccxlv- ccclvi.

⁷¹ Wallace, “Edwards,” ccxcv. Due to his controversies with the adversaries of the Reformed throughout his whole life, it would not be an exaggeration to say that polemic nature permeated most of Edwards’ works. As noted in the title page of his *Theologia Reformata* (1713), the scope of his opponents which he targeted in his writings includes nearly all sorts, such as the Papists, the Arians, the Socinians, the Pelagians, the Remonstrants, the Anabaptists, the Antinomians, the Deists, the Atheists, the Sceptics, the Enthusiasts and the Libertines.

⁷² Regarding the debate between Edwards and Locke, Britannica writes that “It is certain that his attack upon Mr. Locke was approved and applauded by a number of learned men, both at home and abroad. According to our manuscript, Mr. Edwards obtained a complete victory in this controversy... but, our author’s writings against Mr. Locke have sunk into total neglect, while the *Reasonableness of Christianity* still continues to be read.” “Edwards,” Britannica, 545.

⁷³ Appended to this work was also his first attack on John Locke’s *The Reasonableness of*

Conflict with natural science also loomed large in the writings of Edwards. Worrying about some of the implications of recent discoveries in natural science, he published *Cometomania. A Discourse of Comets: Shewing their Original, Substance, Place, time, magnitude, motion, Number . . . and, more especially, their Prognosticks, Significations and Presages. Being a brief Resolution of a seasonable Query, viz. Whether the Appearance of Comets be the Sign of approaching Evil?* (London: 1684) and with a rejection of Copernican astronomy *Brief Remarks Upon Mr. Whiston's New Theory of the Earth* (London: 1697). Against the Arminians, he also produced two important works for the current study, *The Arminian Doctrines Condemn'd* (London: 1711) and *A Letter to the Reverend Lawrence Fogg* (London: 1715).⁷⁴

However, one can find more than polemical works in the writings of John Edwards.⁷⁵ Most notably, Edwards produced a systematic *Body of Christian Divinity* that came out between 1707 and 1713 which was the last decade of his life.⁷⁶ This remarkable

Christianity as Socinian. Edwards asserts that Locke's views ultimately lead to Socinianism. This work includes Edwards' criticism of Socinianism as well as deism.

⁷⁴ In addition to these works, to refute William Whiston's (1667-1752) defense of Arianism and Samuel Clarke's (1675–1729) doctrine of Trinity, Edwards wrote *Observations and Reflections on Mr. Whiston's Primitive Christianity* (London: 1712) *Animadversions on Dr. Clarke's Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* (London: 1712) and *A Supplement to the Animadversions* (London: 1713), respectively. There also appeared posthumously two anti-Roman polemics, *The Doctrines Controverted between Papists and Protestants Particularly and Distinctly Considered With an Introduction, Giving an Account of the Rise and Gradual Progress of Popery, and of the Decay of it at the Reformation. The Whole is concluded with Full and Entire Answers to some Cavils of the Church of Rome against the Protestant Religion and the Professors of it* (London: 1724), which debates the full range of doctrinal and historical issues splitting the two groups, and *A Brief Confutation of these Two False and Dangerous Positions; Namely, I. That the Church of Rome is a true Church, and consequently that Salvation may be attained in it. II That the Ministers of the Gospel are True and Proper priests, and have their True and Proper Sacrifice and Altar now on Earth*, printed in his *Remaines* (London: 1730).

⁷⁵ Nevertheless, theological polemic is not absent in his other genres such as his systematic theological treatises and his sermons. For example, his *Body of Christian Divinity* is filled with a large dose of the refutation of error and heresy.

⁷⁶ The term 'divinity' here is peculiar to English usage. In Latin, *divinitas* refers to the deity or godhead itself. However, when it is used in a theological discipline in English context, it indicates "the knowledge or science concerning divine things, the *scientia rerum divinarum*." This type of the term appears in the titles of systems and treatises by the English Reformed in the seventeenth century such as Ames, Leigh, and Watson. Muller, *PRRD* I, 156. Cf. Gill defines the meaning of the word 'divinity' for the title of his famous work, *The Body of Divinity* as "a Treatise on the science of divine things, sacred truths, and Christian doctrines, taken out of the Scripture." He also writes that "Foreign writers never entitle their

work is composed of three parts and five large volumes.⁷⁷ *Veritas Redux: Evangelical Truths Restored* (London: 1707) is the first part of the theological treatises. In this work, Edwards selects and elaborates on the following five topics: The divine decrees, the impotency of man's free-will, original sin, grace and conversion, the extent of Christ's redemption, perseverance.⁷⁸ *The Doctrine of Faith and Justification Set in a True Light* (London: 1708) is the second part of the theological treatises which deals with the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer and the nature and role of faith and good works in salvation. The third part, in three volumes under the title *Theologia Reformata*, consists of his exposition of the Apostles Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Sermon on the Mount.⁷⁹

works of this kind, *corpus vel systema vel medulla divinitatis*, a body or system, or marrow of divinity, but *corpus vel sysfema vel medulla theologiae*, a body or system or marrow of theology." John Gill, "Introduction" in *A Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity: or A System of Evangelical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures*, (London: 1839), xli-xlii. For a detailed discussion of the usage of the term 'divinity' in the English Reformed, see Muller, *PRRD* I, 156-58.

⁷⁷ Edwards acquired a significant degree of influence among his contemporaries and posterities after this publication. For example, the Arminian Thomas Stackhouse, in his *Complete Body of Divinity* (1729), mentioned that Edwards' *Theologia Reformata* was one of the best known and most widely used works of systematic theology then in circulation. Thomas Stackhouse, *A Complete Body of Speculative and Practical Divinity* (London, 1729), i. He also adds that "Dr Edwards was a very learned man, and his *Theologia Reformata* is a magazine of knowledge": even if its principles were 'purely Calvinistical.'" Ibid.

⁷⁸ Regarding this, Edwards states that "I begin with these points because I am persuaded that they appertain to the foundation, and that they are requisite to be known, in order to the right understanding and apprehending the whole Christian religion." Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, vii. See also Ibid., xv. Cf. One sees here that unlike the scholastic systems frequently begin with a definition of theology followed by a statement of its principia, viz., a locus on Scripture and a locus on God, *Veritas Redux*, the opening work in his extended Reformed system, *Body of Divinity*, is devoid of a prolegomenon both in name and substance. It nevertheless includes some element of it. For example, Edwards gives his principia. Edwards writes that "I have used the best expedients to know the truth. I have earnestly and constantly solicited the divine help; I have diligently consulted the Sacred Oracles, and made the Bible the standard of my belief." Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, iii. See also Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 558.

⁷⁹ Original full title of the first two volumes is *Theologia Reformata: or, The Body and Sbustance of the Christian Reliigion, comprised in distinct Discourses or Treatises upon The Apostles Creed, The Lord's Prayer, and The Ten Commandments* (London: 1713) and the that of the third volume is *Theologia Reformata: or Discourses on Those Graces and Duties which are purely Evangelical, and not contained in the Moral Law: Helps, Motives, and Advantages of Performing them. Being an Entire Treatise in Four Parts: And it added to the two former volumes, makes a Compleat Body of Divinity* (London: 1726) Here, one can notice that Edwards does not follow the traditional order or the table of contents of the scholastic systematic work. Indeed, as already noted in his omission of prolegomena, Edwards' *Body of Divinity* shows some differences in comparison to the traditional scholastic dogmatic systems of Turretin and other continental writers in the seventeenth century. Edwards tries to simplify the scholastic Protestant dogmatic

Edwards also published pastoral works. Among them, his three volumes entitled *The Preacher; A Discourse Shewing, what are the Particular Offices and Employments of those of that Character in the Church*, published between 1705 and 1709 shines forth the most. This magnum opus which deals with pastoral strategies such as how to prepare and preach a sermon evidences his commitment to seeking a balance between doctrine and practice.⁸⁰ In addition to *The Preacher*, the publication of *The Plague of the Heart* and *A Treatise of Repentance* which are based on sermons he had preached to his congregation during his regular ministry reveals “his continued commitment to the preaching characteristic of Calvinist spirituality.”⁸¹

Besides his many works of controversial divinity and pastorals works, the range of his publications also includes the publication of his numerous sermons such as *Twelve Sermons on Special Occasions and Subject* (London 1698) and *A Sermon on the Accession of King George the First* (London: 1714), and other significant theological works such as *A Dicourse of Episcopacy* (London: 1730) which is the defense of the ecclesiology of the Church of England and *Patrologia* (London: 1731) which discusses

structure by seeking to present his views in a more approachable way. Concerning this, Edwards states that “Next I’m to tell the reader, that I have not gone in a systematic way, lest I should be too dry and formal; but I have used a greater latitude, and have proceeded in a method which I have found to be most natural, easie, and useful, especially to those of meaner capacity: for I have calculated my work for the benefit of the ordinary and unlearned reader, as well as of the intelligent and studious.” Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, v. In Edwards’ time, distaste for and critique of traditional orthodox or ‘scholastic’ theology was becoming rapidly widespread. Thus, Hampton states that “after the Restoration, the Reformed did not publish a great deal by way of properly ‘academic’ literature, that is to say Latin lectures, disputations, or theological systems.” Hampton, *Anti Arminians*, 33. Concerning the more detailed information on this, see *ibid.*, 32-34. Cf. John Gill, *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, xxxv.

⁸⁰ Edwards often emphasizes the importance of the application. For instance, he writes that “I generally let no doctrine pass without applying it; for this is the life of theology, to shew what influence the several heads of it have on the hearts and lives, on the minds and manners of men.” Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, iii.

⁸¹ John Edwards, *The Plague of the Heart . . . with Directions for our behaviour under the Present Judgement and Plague of the Almighty* (Cambridge, 1665); *idem*, *A Treatise of Repentance* (London, 1718). Actually, he began his publishing career with a pastoral work, entitled *The Plague of the Heart* which is a forty-eight page treatise based on sermons he had preached to his congregation in Trinity Church, Cambridge during the crisis of outbreak of plague in that city.

the study of the interpretation of the Church Fathers.⁸² Indeed, Edwards deals with almost all theological topics in his writings. One significant genre that he did not work on is biblical commentaries. However, his works are usually fully filled with biblical exegesis and particularly his two books dealing with the interpretation of problematic texts, *An Enquiry into Four Remarkable Texts of the New Testament which Contain Difficulty in them, with a Probable Resolution of Them* (Cambridge, 1692) and *A Farther Enquiry into Several Remarkable Texts of the Old and New Testament which contain Some Difficulty in them with a Probable Resolution of them* (London, 1692) ranks Edwards as a excellent biblical exegete.⁸³ Thus, considering the scope, influence, and quality of Edwards' works, *Britannica* testifies that "all unbiased and impartial men voted him, by universal consent, to be one of the most valuable writers of his time."⁸⁴ Unfortunately, however, as noted by *Britannica*, most of Edwards' publications have been forgotten by modern readers.

⁸² Edwards' study of the interpretation of the works of Church Fathers is also contained in his *A Free Discourse concerning Truth and Error, Especially in Matters of Religion* (1701)

⁸³ Besides these works, in his early career, Edwards made his effort to defend the truth and integrity of the Bible against his opponents by publishing *Of the Truth and Authority of Scripture* (London: 1693) *Of the Stile of Scripture* (London: 1694) and *Of the Excellency and perfection of Scripture* (London: 1695).

⁸⁴ "Edwards," *Britannica*, 546.

Chapter 2: Historical Context of John Edwards: The Debate in late Seventeenth– and Early Eighteenth–Century England

I. Reformed Orthodoxy in Late Seventeenth– and Early Eighteenth–Century England

Before examining Edwards' doctrine of free choice in detail, it is important to place Edwards in his own English ecclesiastical context and to consider the intellectual atmosphere of late seventeenth– and early eighteenth–century England. The purpose of this chapter is thus to provide the religious and intellectual setting for Edwards' doctrine of free choice and to clarify the cultural horizon in which Edwards' debates with his adversaries occur concerning the issue of the relation between divine necessity and human freedom.

It is generally conceded that the tradition of Protestant Scholasticism was declining in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth century. That is, it started to lose its dominance as a main intellectual power. Concerning the transitional phase of high orthodoxy, Muller states as follows:

Following 1685, the tenor of orthodoxy changed, although the confessional boundaries continued to remain relatively in place. Given the difficulty of periodization and the presence, in the late seventeenth century, of various forces and pressures that would bring on the Enlightenment, some writers have further divided the chronology of orthodoxy by identifying a “transitional phase” and even a “transition theology” from ca. 1685 to ca. 1725. Certainly, after 1685, the theology represented by the more traditional writers ceased to be as dominant an intellectual pattern in the church and in the theological faculties of the great Protestant universities as it had been in the mid-seventeenth century, although the theology and the ethos of orthodoxy was carried forward by a significant number of theologians. The changes that took place included an increased pressure on the precritical textual, exegetical, and hermeneutical model of orthodoxy, an alteration of the philosophical model used by theologians from the older Christian Aristotelian approach to either a variant of the newer rationalism or a virtually a-philosophical version of dogmatics.¹

¹ Muller, *PRRD* I. 31. Muller also states “This is also the era of the beginning of internal divisions in the Reformed confessions over the issues raised by the piety of the Second Reformation or *Nadere Reformatie* and by the dispossessed status of Reformed Protestants in England and France. By 1725, a fairly uniform and unified confessional subscription had faded both in England and in Switzerland.” *Ibid.*, 32. cf. Martin I. Klauber, “The Eclipse of Reformed Scholasticism in Eighteenth-Century Geneva: Natural Theology from Jean-Alphonse Turretin to Jacob Vernet,” in *The Identity of Geneva: Christian*

The period covered by the later seventeenth and early eighteenth century in England was no exception to this situation. Since 1660, England was undergoing “profound intellectual and cultural changes” which challenged many of the previous traditional religious thoughts and ideas, especially made by English Calvinists of an earlier time.² In particular, the Reformed Anglicans of the post-Restoration Church encountered a wide variety of antagonists and this brought huge controversies in this period. Regarding this, Hampton states as follows:

Anglican churchmen in this period were therefore forced to engage with, and adapt to, the widespread perception of moral decline in post-Restoration England, the rise of the New Philosophy, the late seventeenth-century flowering of patristic study, and the robust anti-Calvinist theology being advanced by many of their contemporaries. As a result, the Anglican Reformed of the late seventeenth century frequently hold their views in tension with emphases drawn from outside the Reformed tradition.³

Indeed, the revival of Arminianism, the rise of Socinianism, deism, atheism, and the natural sciences, the flowering of the new philosophies such as those of John Locke, René Descartes, and Thomas Hobbes, and the emergence of the Cambridge Platonists and the Latitudinarians were all major threats to the English Reformed camp and the conflicts

Commonwealth, 1564-1864, eds. John B. Roney and Martin I. Klauber (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1998), 129-41.

² Dewey D. Wallace, Jr. *Shapers of English Calvinism, 1660-1714: Variety, Persistence, and Transformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), xvii. Wallace states that “it was a watershed in the transition of England into a more modern world.” Ibid., xlvii. Concerning the change of an intellectual world and the emergence of new (religious) ideas in England during the Restoration and its aftermath, see Wallace, “Introduction,” in *Shapers of English Calvinism*; S. L. Bethell, *The Cultural Revolution of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Dennis Dobson Ltd., 1951); Paul Hazard, *The European Mind: 1680-1715*, translated by J. Lewis May (1952; reprint, Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1963); Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Gerald R. Cragg, *From Puritanism to the Age of Reason: A Study in the Changes in Religious Thought Within the Church of England, 1660-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950); idem, *The Church and the Age of Reason, 1648-1789* (London: Penguin Books, 1960); Roland N. Stromberg, *Religious Liberalism in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954); Martin Mulrow and Jan Rohls, eds. *Socinianism and Arminianism: Antitrinitarians, Calvinists and Cultural Exchange in Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); John Redwood, *Reason, Ridicule and Religion: The Age of Enlightenment in England 1660-1750* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1976).

³ Stephen Hampton, *Anti-Arminians: The Anglican Reformed Tradition from Charles II to George I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 8-9.

between the Reformed and those adversaries were unavoidable. Their ideas soon became widespread and achieved considerable currency in England. Consequently, under the influence of the Enlightenment already dawning by 1685, Reformed orthodoxy rapidly began to lose its influence in religious life of England.⁴

However, regarding the evaluation of the status of the Anglican Reformed tradition after the Restoration, there is a disagreement among scholars. According to old scholarship, the Reformed tradition has been virtually erased from the picture.⁵ For instance, G. R. Cragg states as follows:

The second half of the seventeenth century saw many changes in English religious thought, but none more striking than the overthrow of Calvinism. ... At the beginning of the century. It had dominated the religious life of England; by the end its power had been completely overthrown. [English Calvinism was] ... too old to refashion the framework of their theological system... Their Calvinism was a survival from the past, and bore no real relation to the interests and ideas of the new day.⁶

Old scholars also tend to argue that there remain just a few Reformed thinkers within the post-Restoration Church. Stromberg describes John Edwards as “by 1700 ... about the

⁴ Wallace, *Shapers of English Calvinism*, lxvii. Concerning the decline of Calvinism in England of this period, Wallace writes that “The decline of Calvinism in general culture, especially in the world of polite letters, is apparent enough. The generation after 1660 was on the threshold of the Enlightenment, and a new spirit of critical inquiry was rising, while at the same time religious thinking was tending to give more and more scope to nature at the expense of grace. Paul Hazard has claimed that the great clash of ideals between the traditional and the modern occurred before 1700, and the point has considerable validity when applied to the underlying implications of English religious controversy toward the end of the seventeenth century.” Dewey D. Wallace Jr., *Puritans and Predestination: Grace in English Protestant Theology 1525-1695* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 158.

⁵ Hampton, *Anti-Arminian*, 4. On this, see also Cragg, *From Puritanism to the Age of Reason*, 13-36; Daniel Walker Howe, “The Decline of Calvinism: An Approach to Its Study,” *Studies in Society and History* 14 (June, 1942), 306-27; Christopher Hill, *A Tinker and Poor Man: John Bunyan and His Church, 1628-1688* (New York: Norton, 1988).

⁶ Cragg, *From Puritanism to the Age of Reason*, 13. Hill also writes that John Bunyan’s time is “the end of predestinarian theology as the major intellectual force it had been in the preceding century and a half.” Hill, *A Tinker and Poor Man*, 344. Cf. David Field refers to the rejection of Calvinism after 1660 in England as “the single most important feature on the theological landscape of England in the later seventeenth century.” David P. Field, *‘Rigide Calvinisme in a Softer Dresse’: The Moderate Presbyterianism of John Howe (1630-1705)* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 2004), 4.

only remaining example of a prominent Anglican Calvinist” because “High and low Churchmen alike were Arminian.”⁷

In spite of their more nuanced description of Reformed Anglicans after the Restoration than that of old scholarship, recent scholars such as Nicholas Tyacke and John Spurr also repeat the almost identical judgments on the Anglican Reformed tradition in a high orthodoxy era. According to them, the Anglican Reformed tradition had become such a marginal voice within the later Stuart Church.⁸ Spurr, for example, argues that although the Reformed theology survived within the Church of England after the Restoration, “the renunciation of the old orthodoxy, associated with the younger generation of churchmen, was fast becoming the dominant school of the day.”⁹

Recently, however, Stephen Hampton has challenged the standard evaluation of the Anglican Reformed tradition after the Restoration by insisting that in spite of many challenges, the Reformed tradition firmly persisted within the Church of England in the post-Restoration Church:

Yet, despite the powerful opposition it provoked; despite its associations with the execution of Charles I and the evils of the Commonwealth; despite the astounding popularity of Arminian works such as Allestree’s *The Whole Duty of Man*; the Reformed tradition retained a hold over the minds of many theologians long after the Restoration, and well into the reign of Queen Anne. It remained, in other words, a compelling way of understanding Anglicanism far longer than most historians have

⁷ Stromberg, *Religious Liberalism*, 111. Rupp also describes that “Although by the turn of the century John Edwards of Cambridge was the only noted Calvinist writer, there were more Calvinist dons at Oxford and Cambridge and (we may surmise) in country parishes than has been recognized.” Ernest Gordon Rupp, *Religion in England, 1688-1791* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 326. See also Richard Warck, *School of the Prophets: Yale College, 1701-1740*. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1973), 99-100.

⁸ Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 4. See Nicholas Tyacke, “Religious Controversy,” in *The History of the University of Oxford vol. IV: The Seventeenth Century Oxford*, ed. Nicholas Tyacke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 569-620; John Spurr, *Restoration Church of England 1646-1689* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); 279-330.

⁹ John Spurr, “‘Latitudinarianism’ and the Restoration Church” *The Historical Journal*, 31, I (1988), 82. See also Cragg, *From Puritanism to the Age of Reason*, 4. Spurr, *Restoration Church of England*, 281. Spurr thus claims that “The old disputes between Calvinist and Arminian, he asserts, became gradually irrelevant to a generation nourished on this new way of linking.” *Ibid.*, 314.

recognized. Indeed, some of the evidence which has been interpreted as pointing to a growing Arminian hegemony is capable of quite another reading.¹⁰

In order to prove his argument, Hampton lists a number of Reformed theologians of the later Stuart Church with some brief explanation of their life and work.¹¹ He claims that the range and significance of the people he listed testify that “the Reformed theological tradition remained a potent force within post-Restoration Anglicanism.”¹² Hampton also argues that the teaching, writing, and polemical engagement of these Reformed thinkers shows that “Reformed divinity still had to be taken seriously at the dawn of the eighteenth century.”¹³ Especially, he claims, considering the fact that the Anglican Reformed writers voluminously produced almost every kind of theological work, there is no doubt that Reformed opinions still remain influential in the Church of England.¹⁴ In addition, Hampton asserts a strong possibility that these Reformed figures maintained a kind of personal networking as a coherent group.¹⁵

¹⁰ Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 28.

¹¹ Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 10-22.

¹² Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 22. Hampton summarizes this as “Of the men we have mentioned, twelve were bishops and six were deans. Several of them held senior divinity chairs in Oxford or Cambridge, and so were in a position to influence the thinking of successive generations of Restoration clergy. The circle included several of the greatest scientific minds of the Restoration Church (in Boyle, Ward, and Wallis), one of her most celebrated preachers (in South), two of her most eminent Patristic scholars (in Pearson and Beveridge), and two of her most influential ecclesiastical courtiers (in Morley and Compton). These are men, in other words, without whom it is simply not possible to paint an accurate picture of the later Stuart Church.” Ibid.

¹³ Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 31. For instance, Hampton insists that the two major theological controversies which broke out by George Bull’s *Harmonia Apostolica* (1670) and William Sherlock’s *A Vindication of the doctrine of the Trinity* (1690), respectively, indicate the persistent strength of the Reformed circle within the Church of England. Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 37. He maintains that in those debates, the Reformed Anglican played the key role. To prove his case, in the main four chapters in the book, he deals with the major post-Restoration controversies over justification and the Trinity in light of the divide between the Arminian and Reformed camps.

¹⁴ Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 32.

¹⁵ Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 22. Concerning this, he writes that “They not only shared a common commitment to the Reformed theological tradition; in many cases they also knew each other, dedicated books and sermons to each other, sought advice from each other, and, where the opportunity presented itself, favoured people who thought as they did.” Ibid. Nevertheless, Hampton insists that the Reformed tradition of the post-Restoration Church was diverse in character and engagement especially in the life of the Anglican Church. In other words, even though they were strongly committed to a Reformed

On the basis of these proofs, Hampton convincingly claims that old scholarship has overlooked the ongoing significance of Reformed theology in the life of the English Church and, unlike their assertions, the Reformed theologians of the post-Restoration Church were “both numerous and powerful.”¹⁶ Thus, he concludes that there was “both the consistency and resilience of the Reformed theological tradition within the Church of England into the Hanoverian age, and the ongoing significance of the Reformed-Arminian divide to the theological landscape of the later Stuart Church.”¹⁷

Certainly, Hampton’s work made a significant contribution to the history of Reformed theology in the high orthodoxy era by showing that contrary to the dominant assumptions in the secondary literature on post-Restoration English theology, the Reformed tradition in the Anglican Church remained quite strong until the beginning of the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, the immediate context in which Edwards was situated, particularly, that of the University of Cambridge seems to be far more serious than the overall situation of the Anglican Reformed in Edwards’ time. According to Edwards’ own testimonies, it appears that the downfall of the Reformed orthodox was proceeding apace, and its influence over Cambridge was almost excised, except Edwards’ effort. Regarding this, especially mentioning the rise and dominance of Arminianism in his context, Edwards states as follows:

... it is no wonder that the Arminian doctrines are taken up and embraced by most of our preachers, and by the generality of their auditors; for the former see that these are

theological system, they were “also far from being a sterile or monochrome group.” Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 23. As to the uniformity and diversity in the Reformed camps in the Church of England of the late 17th and early 18th England, see Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 22-31; Wallace’s *Shapers of English Calvinism*.

¹⁶ Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 36.

¹⁷ Hampton, *Anti-Arminians*, 38. cf. Wallace states that “with regard to England during this period, the assertion of the emergence of new strains of thought inimical to traditional religious views needs to be modified with the emphatic reservation that much of the traditional religious outlook continued into the post 1660 world and that the intellectual history of the era has often been dominated by the “Whiggish” anachronism of reading the era in the light of later developments.” Wallace, *Shapers of English Calvinism*, xlvii.

grateful and acceptable to the latter, and therefore, they do what they can to propagate them. I attribute the universal spreading of these opinions to this, that, the framers of them have suited them to the understandings of the vulgar, and that there is no study or care requisite to apprehend them.¹⁸

In this situation, Edwards himself “felt desperation because during the Restoration era Calvinism was rapidly losing ground in the established church, even if some strands of it persisted.”¹⁹ Undoubtedly, as he often states, Edwards’ Calvinism “marginalized him within the established church and he had few if any ties to its leadership.”²⁰ Hence, this hostile situation to Reformed theology in England caused him to seek to defend it and, consequently, led him to write voluminous theological writings against the antagonists of the Reformed of his time.²¹

¹⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, xxiii. Edwards also writes that “the Calvinian doctrines for their being rejected by the generality of our brethren the Clergy... we see they [the Arminian Doctrines] are so generally received by our present divines.” John Edwards, *The Preacher: A Discourse Shewing, what are the Particular Offices and Employments of those of that Character in the Church*, Part. III (London: 1705), 128.

¹⁹ As a proof of the decline of the Reformed in England after the Restoration, Wallace points out the fact that “Bishops who had held fast to Calvinist theology were disappearing from the scene.” Wallace, “Edwards,” cccxvii. For the detailed information on that, see *ibid*.

²⁰ Wallace, “Edwards,” cccxviii. Edwards comments that “In spite of parading his Church of England credentials, he nonetheless on occasion gave clues as to his marginality--in one case referring to himself as “not all alone like Athanasius was” (suggesting that it might be heroic and orthodox to be all alone), noting that “several” of his “learned brethren” in the ministry of the established church agreed with him.” Edwards, *The Preacher* Part I, xii.

²¹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 236. Edwards believes that his opponents are “wounded . . . under the fifth Rib” by his attempt to restore “the Calvinian doctrines” in the English church. Edwards, *The Preacher*, Part III, 223. Edwards also did not give up hope that the current situation might change and England turn back to the Reformed tradition by Queen Anne and her bishops’ return to it and the union of England and Scotland. Edwards, *The Preacher*, Part I, xix; John Edwards, *One Nation and One King. A Discourse on Ezek. Xxxvii. 22. Occasion’d by the Happy Union of England and Scotland*, (London, 1707), 9-12.

II. The Debate on Free Choice in Late Seventeenth– and Early Eighteenth–Century England

1. Brief History of the Debates on the Reformed Understanding of Human Free Choice and its Related Issues since the Reformation

From its earliest beginnings of the Reformation, the doctrine of free choice had been a volatile issue between the Reformers and the adversaries against them.²² The core of the issue was how human free choice can be reconciled with divine necessity such as grace, predestination, foreknowledge, and providence. Certainly, the debate on free choice and its relation with divine causality played a significant role in launching the Reformation and also in formulating the thoughts of the early Reformers.²³

The person who planted the seed of the first phase of the heated debate over human free choice in the Reformation arguably was Luther.²⁴ In order to defend his understanding of salvation by grace alone and the bondage of the will against the Pelagianizing tendencies of some late medieval theologians, Luther resolutely used necessitarian concepts and arguments to prove his case.²⁵ For example, Luther states as follows:

For I misspoke when I said that free will before grace exists in name only; rather I should have simply said ‘free will is a fiction among real things, a name with no reality.’ For no one has it within his control to intend anything, good or evil, but

²² Choy states that “The doctrine of the bondage of the human will is a major contested issue in the Reformation and is closely related with key issues debated in the Reformation, namely the doctrine of justification and the emphasis on *sola gratia*.” Kiven S. K. Choy, “Calvin’s Defense and Reformulation of Luther’s Early Reformation Doctrine of the Bondage of the Will” (Ph.D. diss., Grand Rapids: Calvin Theological Seminary, 2010), 31. McSorley calls the doctrine of the bondage of the human will “the inmost center of the Reformation.” Cf. Hans Joachim Iwand, “Theologische Einföhrung und Anmerkungen (in Verbindung mit B. Jordahn) zu Luthers Schrift Dass der frei Wille nichts sei.” (Miinchen, 1954), 253, 312. Quoted in Harry J. McSorley, *Luther: right or wrong? An ecumenical-theological study of Luther's major work, The bondage of the will* (New York: Newman Press, 1968), 11.

²³ Choy, “Calvin’s Defense and Reformulation” 2.

²⁴ Choy classifies “the years 1517-1530 as the first phase of the Reformation debate over the problem of human willing and free choice, and the years 1531-1564 as the second phase.” Choy, “Calvin’s Defense and Reformulation,” 2.

²⁵ Zwingli is another important figure who heavily relied upon the use of necessitarian argument in the early Reformation. For a good brief overview of this, see “Choy, “Calvin’s Defense and Reformulation,” 108-111.

rather, as was rightly taught by the article of Wyclif which was condemned at Constance, all things occur by absolute necessity. That was what the poet meant when he said, “All things are settled by a fixed law.” And Christ in Matt 10[:29-30]: “The leaf of a tree does not fall to the earth apart from the will of your Father who is in heaven, and the hairs of your head are all numbered.” And Isaiah 41 [:23] taunts them: “Do good also or evil, if you can!”²⁶

Emphasizing the active presentation of God’s role over sins and the preference for biblical expressions for it, Luther also rejects the use of the term, *liberum arbitrium*.

Concerning this, he insists that since the will of the fallen humanity does not possess any power to do good, the use of the term *liberum arbitrium* causes confusion and contradiction:

Therefore, to say that free choice exists and has indeed some power, but that it is an ineffective power, is what the Sophists call *oppositum in adjecto* [“a contradiction in terms”]. It is as if you said that there is a free choice which is not free, which is as sensible as calling fire cold and earth hot.²⁷

²⁶ Martin Luther, *An Assertion of All the Articles of Martin Luther Which Were Quite Recently Condemned by a Bull of Leo X, Article 36*, translated and annotated by Clarence H. Miller, in Desiderius Erasmus, *Controversies*, edited by Charles Trinkaus, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, vol. 71 (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 306. “Male enim dixi, quod liberum arbitrium ante gratiam sit res de solo titulo, sed simpliciter debui dicere” liberum arbitrium est figmentum in rebus seu titulus sine re’. Quia nulli est in manu sua quippiam cogitate mali aut boni, sed omnia (ut Viglephi articulus Constantiae lamnatus recte docet) de necessitate absoluta eveniunt. Quod et Poeta voluit, quando dixit ‘certa stant omnia lege’, Et Christus Matth. X. ‘Folium arboris non cadit in terram sine voluntate patris vestri qui in celis est et capilli capitis vestri omnes numerate sunt’. Et Esa. Xli. Eis insultat dicens ‘Bene quoque aut male si potestis facite’.” Martin Luther, *Assertio omnium articulorum M. Lutheri per bullam leonis X novissimam danatorum* (1520),” in Martin Luther, *Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (hereafter WA) vol. 7 (Weimar: Hermann Bohlaus Nachfolger, 1883-1987), 146; Luther also evidently undermines the genuine contingency of the second causality in *Assertion*: “Fallit hos miseros homines rerum humanarum inconstantia seu (ut vocant) contingentia: oculos enim suos stultos mergunt in res ipsas operaque rerum, nec aliquando elevant in conspectum dei, ut res supra res in deo cognoscerent. Nobis enim ad inferna spectantibus res apparent arbitrariae et fortuitae, sed ad suprema spectantibus omnia sunt necessaria, Quia non sicut nos, sed sicut ille vult, ita vivimus, facimus, patimur omnes et omnia.” WA, 7:146.

²⁷ Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works* (hereafter LW) ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, vol 33 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955-1986), 67; “Itaque dicere, liberum arbitrium esse et habere vim quidem, sed inefficacem, est id, quod Sophistae vocant oppositum in adiecto, ac si dicas, liberum arbitrium est, quod liberum non est. Sicut, si ignem frigidum et terram calidam dixeris. Habeat sane ignis vim caloris, vel infernalis, si non ardet neque urit, friget vera et frigefacit, ne ignis quidem, multo minus calidus mihi dicetur, nisi pictum aut fictum ignem volueris habere.” WA 18, 636. On Luther’s rejection of the term “*liberum arbitrium*,” see also Thesis 13 of *Heidelberg Disputation* (1518) and the thirty-sixth article condemned by the papal bull, *Exsurge Domine: Adversus exorabilem Antichristi bullam* (1520). On Luther’s rejection of the term *liberum arbitrium*, see Choy, “Calvin’s Defense and Reformulation,” 89-95; McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 224-53.

In this regard, for Luther, the term *liberum arbitrium* does not correctly describe the actual status of the fallen will for mankind²⁸ and discarding the term is “the safest and most religious thing to do.”²⁹ Consequently, Luther’s concept of absolute necessity, the use of necessitarian argument to argue for the bondage of the human will, and the rejection of the term *liberum arbitrium* show that Luther leaned towards a little deterministic tendency on the issue and, consequently, gave rise to the controversies with opponents such as Erasmus and John Eck.³⁰

However, in the second phase which begins with the death of Zwingli and ends with the death of Calvin, we see the changes and the shift of focus in the formulations among the key Reformers. Regarding this, Choy argues as follows:

Arguably, in the second phase of the Reformation, the Reformers had, in Peter Stephens’ words, “twin concerns” rather than a single focused concern as in the early Reformation. In the early Reformation, Luther and Melancthon developed a strong necessitarian argument against the existence of free will to defend the biblical teaching of the bondage of the human will and *sola gratia* in human salvation. Their elaboration, loaded occasionally with unnuanced necessitarian arguments and presentations, generated the need in the second phase of the Reformation to argue

²⁸ Luther also points out that “Est enim magna nimis et amplissima pleneque vox liberi arbitrii, qua populus putat eam vim significari (sicut et vis et natura vocabuli exigit), quae libere possit in utrumque se vertere, neque ea vis ulli caedat vel subiecta sit. Quod si sciret, hoc secus habere et modiculam scintillulam vix ea significari eamque prorsus inefficacem se sola, captivam et servam diaboli, mirum, si non lapidarent nos tanquam illusores et deceptores, ut qui aliud sonemus aliudque lodge signincemus, imo necdum constet aut conveniat, quid significemus.” WA 18:637. Choy states that “Luther’s departure, for some critics in his time, was a dangerous move that unnecessarily distorted the orthodox tradition. But for Luther, the rejection was a necessary correction for unbiblical practice and a correct interpretation of the mature Augustine.” Choy, “Calvin’s Defense and Reformulation,” 90.

²⁹ “Quod si omnino vocem eam omittere nolumus, quod esset tutissimum et religiosissimum, bona fide tamen eatenus uti doceamus, ut homini arbitrium liberum non respectu superioris, sed tantum inferioris se rei concedatur, hoc est, ut sciat sese in suis facultatibus et possessionibus habere ius utendi, faciendi, omittendi pro libero arbitrio, licet et id ipsum regatur solius Dei libero arbitrio, quocumque illi placuerit.” WA, 18:638

³⁰ According to Choy, Luther’s main concern in such arguments is to refute the idea of merit of congruity (*meritum de congruo*) that human free choice can prepare itself for justification by cooperating with grace. Choy, “Calvin’s Defense and Reformulation,” 77. McSorley also insists that “His unquestionable concern was to refute and to destroy the exaggerated Neo-Semipelagian view of free will that found its expression in the Ockham-Biel interpretation of the Scholastic axiom: facienti quod in se est, etc.” McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 262. cf. Heckel, Matthew C. “His Spear Through My Side into Luther: Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of the Will,” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Concordia Seminary, 2005), 16-18.

further that God is not the author of sin. Now the twin concerns, including both the argument for the bondage of the human will and this theodical concern, framed the development of their doctrine.³¹

He continues as follows:

This additional theodical concern leads them to provide more emphasis on affirming the existence of contingency, to give arguments supporting a certain kind of freedom of the will, to clarify the nature of God's sovereignty over sins, and to avoid the necessitarian argument used by the early Reformers."³²

Thus, unlike Luther and Zwingli, major Reformers in the second phase such as Bullinger and Vermigli follow classical Augustinian concepts and scholastic distinctions to affirm the genuine integrity of second causality. For example, even though he in general affirms a strong sense of divine providence, Vermigli defends the genuine existence of contingency and the secondary causes. To elaborate, in order to show that the divine decree does not destroy any possibility of contingencies, Vermigli distinguishes different kinds of causes for a metaphysical solution: the first cause (*causa prima*) and the secondary one (*causa secunda*). According to Vermigli, the first cause (God) does not exclude secondary causes (human will).³³ Instead, he teaches that God uses secondary causes as instruments of His providence.³⁴

³¹ Choy, "Calvin's Defense and Reformulation," 33-34. cf. Stephens argues that "He [Bullinger] then indicates two opposed views (Pelagianism and Manichaeism) which he rejects: one ascribing too much to us and the other too much to God. Some people, he writes, attribute salvation to free will or merit rather than to God's grace, while others, affirming absolute necessity, make God the author of all evil, as if we perish by God's fault, not ours. These twin concerns shape Bullinger's work, though the second is more prominent (777)." He also claims that "It is significant that Bullinger responds to two errors, Pelagianism and Manichaeism, whereas Zwingli in effect engages with Pelagian views." W. Peter Stephens, "Election in Zwingli and Bullinger: A Comparison of Zwingli's Sermon *de Providentia dei* Anamnema (1530) and Bullinger's *Oratio de Moderatione Servanda in Negotio Providentiae, Praedestinationis, Gratiae et Liberi Arbitrii* (1536)," *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 7.1 (April 2005):50, 53.

³² Choy, "Calvin's Defense and Reformulation," 38.

³³ Peter Martyr Vermigli, "Providence," in *Philosophical Works: On Relation of Philosophy to Theology*, edited and translated by Joseph C. McLelland, *The Peter Martyr Library*, vol. 4. (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 1996), 191. Vermigli also uses the distinction between inward and outward causes. Cf. *Ibid.*, 194.

³⁴ Vermigli, "Providence," 191.

Vermigli argues that in his governing of the universe, God maintains the nature of his creatures and leads them accordingly. In other words, divine necessity applies only to the ultimate and first cause, not the proximate or secondary cause:³⁵

Thus we may infer from the foreknowledge of God the necessity of certainty or infallibility, which we cannot do of secondary causes. When we say that God foreknows that this or that will be tomorrow, we rightly add that it will necessarily be. Necessity is not applied to something already known, except insofar as God knows it beforehand as present and already produced. This is why we can infer the necessity and infallibility from God's foreknowledge, but not from proximate causes, because when we say that God foreknows that this or that will happen tomorrow, we rightly add that it will happen necessarily. This makes not only for clarity, but also necessity. For everything that is necessary, we must not say afterward that the thing was necessary, for it is not taken in the same sense as was the foreknowledge of God.³⁶

For Vermigli, "the determination in God is of the kind that agrees with the property or nature of will."³⁷ In this regard, necessity that comes from divine foreknowledge is not absolute but hypothetical.³⁸ According to Vermigli, consequently, free choice exists on the level of secondary causes and is not destroyed by immutable necessity on the level of the first cause. Finally, Vermigli concludes as follows:

The nature of the thing itself was contingent, but when determined by God it became necessary.... It must be concluded that, as we have often said, all things are necessary in relation to the providence of God, while in their own nature they are contingent.³⁹

³⁵ Vermigli, "Providence," 194.

³⁶ Vermigli, "Predestination," 81. Vermigli also states that "I grant that in respect to inward causes man was originally so made that nothing could be necessary for him. Yet we do not therefore exclude the grace and providence of God." Vermigli, "Providence," 189.

³⁷ Vermigli, "Providence," 189.

³⁸ Vermigli, "Providence," 181. Following the medieval scholastic tradition, Vermigli also distinguishes between necessity of certainty or infallibility (*necessitas certitudinis* or *infallibilitatis*) and that of compulsion or coercion (*necessitas coactionis*). Vermigli, *Loci Communes* (London: Thomas Vautrollerius, 1583), 469.

³⁹ Vermigli, "Providence," 195.

Indeed, for Vermigli, one should understand things or events on two different levels to clarify the relation between the divine decree and human contingent acts.⁴⁰ Vermigli, therefore, insists that human action is still contingent in spite of divine foreknowledge, providence, and predestination.⁴¹ The contingent character of our actions is granted by the nature of their proximate cause.⁴²

Consequently, Vermigli's affirmation of the genuine existence of contingency and second causality helps him to overcome the charge that God is the author of sin. Vermigli attributes the cause of the fall to human misuse of his free choice.⁴³ That is, even though God has willed the fall of mankind, human beings are not compelled to sin. Rather, they consent and willingly sin.⁴⁴

However, the necessitarian picture of an earlier Reformation did not completely disappear in the second phase. In particular, there is "essential continuity" between the formulation of Luther and Calvin.⁴⁵ Calvin basically employed "four major characteristics of Luther's formulation": the rejection of the term *liberum arbitrium*, an active concept of God's sovereign will on the fall of Adam, "the preference for biblical expressions" in affirming divine sovereignty over sins, and a reinterpretation of Augustine's heritage.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Vermigli, "Providence," 181-82.

⁴¹ Vermigli, "Providence," 193.

⁴² Vermigli, "Providence," 194; idem, "Predestination," in Peter Martyr Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification: Two Theological Loci* trans and ed with Introduction and Notes by Frank A. James III. *The Peter Martyr Library*, vol. 8 (Kirkville: Truman State University Press, 200), 381.

⁴³ Vermigli, "Whether God is the Author of Sin," in *Philosophical Works: On Relation of Philosophy to Theology*, edited and translated by Joseph C. McLelland, *The Peter Martyr Library*, vol. 4. (Kirkville: Truman State University Press, 1996), 236.

⁴⁴ Vermigli, "Whether God is the Author of Sin," 258.

⁴⁵ Choy, "Calvin's Defense and Reformulation," 264.

⁴⁶ Choy states that "Calvin was perhaps the only major writer of his generation who retained Luther's rejection of the term *liberum arbitrium*." Choy, "Calvin's Defense and Reformulation," 34.

Yet, this similarity does not mean that Calvin is a mere follower of Zwingli and Luther. Like his contemporaries, he adopted a classical Augustinian framework to understand the bondage of human will from a soteriological perspective. That is, Calvin clearly argues that Adam possessed free choice [*liberam electionem*] of good and evil in the prelapsarian state, and he fell by his misuse of it, and that human will is so bound by original sin and the corruption caused by the fall and inclined to evil, fallen human beings can do no spiritual good which truly pleases God.⁴⁷ Understanding well the theodical concern, Calvin also adopts scholastic distinctions to affirm the genuine existence of second causality.⁴⁸ For example, in *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God* (1552), distinguishing between the “remote cause” and the “proximate cause,” Calvin asserts that men freely and voluntarily sin because God is not involved on the level of proximate cause. Thus, in his understanding, even though He is the ultimate cause of everything, God is not the author of sin.⁴⁹ Moreover, Calvin and his contemporary Reformers are basically “unanimous in emphasizing the complete helplessness of fallen human beings. And this concept is closely related with their emphasis on the absolute necessity of divine grace.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Calvin writes that “Let us remember, therefore, that will [*voluntatem*] in man is one thing, and the free choice [*liberam ... electionem*] of good and evil another: for freedom of choice [*eligendi liberate*] having been taken away after the fall of the first man, will [*voluntas*] alone was left; but so completely captive under the tyranny of sin, that it is only inclined to evil.” John Calvin, *Selected Works of John Calvin: Tracts and Letters*, trans. Henry Beveridge, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 113; idem, *Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia*, eds Guilielmus Baum, Eduardus Cunitz, and Eduardus Ruess, (Brunsvigale: C.A. Schwetschke et Filium, 1863-1889), 7:446. Cf. Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.15.8.

⁴⁸ Choy argues that these two sides of Calvin, that is, “the combination of the necessitarian presentation and the reuse of scholastic distinctions” is “the source of different readings of Calvin and of disagreement over the exact character of Calvin’s views on related issues” among previous scholars. Choy, “Calvin’s Defense and Reformulation,” 39-40; 268.

⁴⁹ John Calvin, *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God* trans. J.K.S. Reid (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 181-82. For the detailed comparison on the issue of divine permission of sin between Calvin and others Reformers, see Choy, “Calvin’s Defense and Reformulation,” 245-51.

⁵⁰ Choy, “Calvin’s Defense and Reformulation,” 33. Choy therefore concludes that while Calvin cherished his identity as a defender of Luther’s legacy, he also treasures “the united front” among the Reformers concerning the doctrine of free choice and its related issue. Ibid., 266.

After Calvin's death, the Reformed doctrine of free choice continued to be developed. In particular, one important dispute began to appear within the Reformed churches during the period of early Protestant orthodoxy and it significantly influenced the further development of the Reformed doctrine of free choice.⁵¹ James Arminius (1559-1609), who was a professor at Leiden University since 1603, objected to a previous Reformed understanding of the relation between divine necessity and human freedom, and started to launch an alternative theological understanding of the matter. The most significant difference between Arminius and the Reformed was in the understanding of the process by which the unregenerate person becomes regenerate and what role free choice plays in this work of regeneration. That is, unlike Reformed contemporaries such as Fanciscus Junius (1545-1602), Fanciscus Gomarus (1563-1641) and William Perkins (1558-1602), Arminius asserts that free choice (*liberum arbitrium*) is present in such a way after the fall that human beings in the fallen state can choose spiritual good by his free choice even after the fall through the cooperation with divine grace.⁵² For example, in his "Apology," Arminius forthrightly declares as follows:

‘God will do that which is in Him, for the man who does what is in himself.’ But, even then, the explanation of the Schoolmen ought to have been added-‘that God will do this, not from [the merit of] condignity, but from [that of] congruity; and not because the act of man merits any such thing, but because it is befitting the great mercy and beneficence of God.’ Yet this saying of the Schoolmen I should myself refuse to employ, except with the addition of these words: ‘God will bestow more grace upon that man who does what is in him by the power of Divine Grace

⁵¹ For the development of the doctrine of free choice after Luther in the Lutheran side, see Robert Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method: From Martin Luther to the Formula of Concord* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmann, 2005)

⁵² For example, Arminius insists on the nature of free choice as “the freedom to choose, with which God formed his rational creature, and which his constancy does not suffer to be abolished, lest He should be accused of mutability.” James Arminius, “The Public Disputations of James Arminius,” 9.11, in *The Works of James Arminius*, London ed, 3 vols, Trans. James Nichols and William Nichols (London, 1825, 1828, 1875; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 2:167; idem, Idem, *Opera Theologica*. 2nd Edition. (Frankfurt: Wolfgang Hoffmann, 1635), 200, “est tum libertas arbitrii, cum qua creaturam rationalem condidit Deus, quam Constantia ipsius rescindi non patitur, ne mutabilitatis infimuletur Deus,” See also idem, “Oration III,” in WA, 1:377.

which is already granted to him according to the declaration of Christ, To him that hath shall be given.⁵³

Arminius distinguishes divine grace between “preventing, accompanying and succeeding [subsequent] grace of God.”⁵⁴ The concept of prevenient grace is particularly important for his theology. According to him, the prevenient grace is the beginning of the work of grace which comes before conversion and on which conversion depends.⁵⁵ Arminius argues that prevenient grace is “sufficient” in that it provides everything the sinner needs in order to be saved.⁵⁶ Namely, the sufficient grace renders human beings able to respond positively to the gospel.⁵⁷ However this enabling grace does not make him actually respond. Arminius makes it clear that human beings possess the freedom of choice to accept or reject it and thus grace is resistible.⁵⁸ If they do not give their consent, prevenient and sufficient grace cannot succeed and become efficacious. In order to be saved, human beings must play his role. Otherwise, grace is not efficacious because it does not force them to believe. Arminius, therefore, believes that mankind possesses free choice to reject or accept efficacious grace, to do spiritual good, and to co-operate in the salvation process.⁵⁹

⁵³ Arminius, “Apology,” 15 in WA, 2:16. Another critical example is found in his “Dissertation on Romans 7.” Here, Arminius says, “To will [velle] that which is good [in the sense of outward conformity to the law], which is here the subject of the apostle’s argument, is not peculiar to the regenerate; for it also appertains to the unregenerate.” Arminius, “Seven Chapter... Romans,” in WA, 2:538; Idem, *Opera*, 699.

⁵⁴ Arminius, “Apology,” in WA 1:749; idem, “Hyppolitus,” in WA, 2:700.

⁵⁵ Arminius, “Apology,” in WA, 2:20.

⁵⁶ This sufficient grace is granted to all men by means of “pre-fall creative activity,” “providence,” and “post-fall re-creative activity of God” in Christ. Arminius, “Perkins’s,” in WA, 3:315-16; idem, “Junius,” in WA, 3:168.

⁵⁷ Arminius, “Seventh Chapter... Romans,” in WA, 2:541-43, 632.

⁵⁸ Arminius, “Declaration,” in WA, 1:629.

⁵⁹ After the death of Arminius in 1609, Arminius’ ideas was adopted by his followers such as Simon Episcopius (1583-1643), and they, so called the Remonstrants, caused the ensuing controversy by proposing the famous five points against the Reformed in 1601 and it subsequently resulted in the strong counterattack by the Reformed in the Synod of Dort in 1618-1619.

Along with Arminius' challenge, the publication of Luis de Molina's *Concordia or Harmony of Free Will with the Gifts of Grace* (1588) caused fierce debates between the Jesuits and the Dominicans and between the Reformed and Jesuit theologians on the issue of free choice and its relation with divine necessity in the seventeenth century.⁶⁰ In particular, in order to resolve the tension between human freedom and divine necessity, Molina proposes the theory of divine middle knowledge; besides God's free and necessary knowledge, there is the prevolitional and contingent divine knowledge of how any possible free agent would act given certain circumstances.⁶¹ This idea was employed especially by Arminius and his followers and it became the key issue in the debates between the Reformed and the Arminians.

In addition to the concept of middle knowledge, Molina's definition of human freedom as indifference also greatly influenced his formulation of the doctrine of free choice. Molina states that free denotes that "all things requisite for acting being posited, someone can act or not act or can still do one or the opposite."⁶² Namely, according to the Jesuits and those who accept this notion of freedom, men can choose whatever they like in whatever situation they may be. Thus, being provoked by this notion, the

⁶⁰ Alfred J. Freddoso, "Preface" in Luis de Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge* trans. Alfred J. Freddoso (Ithaca/London: Cornell, 1988), vii. The more detailed information on the publication of Molina's *Concordia* and its aftermath will be dealt with in more detail in the following chapter.

⁶¹ Molina argues that "Triplicem scientiam oportet distinguamus in Deo... Tertiam denique mediam scientiam, qua ex altissima & inscrutabili comprehensione cujusque liberi arbitrii in sua essential intuitus est, quid pro sua innata libertate, si in hoc, vel illo, vel etiam infinitis rerum ordinibus collocaretur, acturum esset, cum tamen posset, si vellet, facere re ipsa oppositum, ut ex dictis disp. 47 & 48 manifestum est." Luis Molina, *Liberi Arbitrii cum Gratiae Donis, Divina Praescientia, Providentia, Praedesstinatione et Reprobatione Concordia*, (Antwerp 1595), XIV, XIII, LII.

⁶² Molina teaches that "Quo pacto illud agens liberum dicitur, quod, positis omnibus requisites ad agendum, potest agree et non agree, aut ita agree unum, ut contrarium etiam agree possit." Molina, *Concordia*, XIV, XIII, III. cf. Molina states that "agens liberum in hac significatione distinguitur contra agens naturale, in cujus potestate non est, agree, & non agree, sed positis omnibus requisites ad agendum necessario agit & ita agit unum, ut non possit contrarium efficere." Molina, *Concordia*, XIV, XIII, II. Francisco Suarez similarly writes that "nam causa libera est quae, positis omnibus requisites ad agendum, pot est agree t non agree." Francisco Suarez, *Disputationes Metaphysicae* in *Omnia Opera*, vol. 25 (Paris: Vives, 1866), XIX, IV. I (706).

Reformed thinkers such as Voetius and Turretin severely refuted the notion of the freedom as indifference.

Consequently, the development of the Reformed doctrine of free choice and related issues entered into a new phase. That is, for the Reformed orthodox thinkers, these new challenges by the opponents such as the Arminians and the Jesuits required “a sharper and more codified polemic against their doctrinal adversaries and more explicit grasp of the tradition, especially of the contribution of the medieval scholasticism.”⁶³ In particular, even though the tendency was already evident in the works of early orthodox thinkers such as Junius and Gomarus,⁶⁴ they substantially employed the more nuanced distinctions and concepts, especially those of scholastic theological and philosophical terminology in order to avoid the charges of Stoic fate or Manichean necessity and to refute their adversaries’ ideas. For example, basically formulating his doctrine of free choice on the basis of the early Reformation heritage, Turretin adopts highly sophisticated scholastic philosophical terms to clarify and defend his position against the concept of freedom as indifference. To resolve the issue whether the overall concept of freedom embraces indifference, he utilizes the scholastic distinctions between *simultatem potentiae* and *potentiam simultatis*, between *in actu primo* and *in actu secundo*, between *in sensu diviso* and *in sensu compositionis*, and between passive or objective and active or subjective indifference. On the bases of these distinctions, Turretin also distinguishes two different types of indifference: (1) “In first act or in the divided sense, as a simultaneity of potencies, which is called passive and objective,” and (2) “In second act or in the compounded sense, as a potency of simultaneities, which is called active and subjective.”⁶⁵ He agrees with the former while he rejects the latter. Turretin then points to

⁶³ Muller, *PRRD* I, 31.

⁶⁴ For Junius and Gomarus’ use of scholastic language on free choice, see Van Asselt, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 95-144.

⁶⁵ Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison Jr. vol. I (New Jersey: P & R Publishing, 1992), X, III, IV.

the difference between the structural moment of the mere potency of the faculty and that of the concrete acts of the faculty. He accepts the indifference to opposites at the former level while he denies it at the latter level. For Turretin, it is impossible for the will to be indifferent after having posited the requisites for acting. In other words, in the state of actualization, the will cannot have indifference in the sense of *potentia simultatis* at the same moment in time. Thus, he strongly opposes Molina who insists that the will is indifferent at every moment with respect to any act provided that the requisites for acting are present. In a formal definition, therefore, Turretin concludes that the true nature of free will does not lie in indifference but in “rational willingness.”⁶⁶ Indeed, Turretin’s treatment of the issue of indifference of the will shows that he was highly indebted to the scholastic philosophical and theological language in order to meet the new challenges in his own times, and this trend is clearly seen in many Reformed protestant scholastics of the orthodox era.⁶⁷

Nevertheless, despite these Reformed ancestors’ continuing efforts, Reformed orthodoxy’s struggles on the topic were not yet over by Edwards’ time. Namely, even though the Reformed doctrine of free choice had been significantly developed, especially through debates with its opponents such as the Remonstrants and the Jesuits, Arminian and Socinian controversies continued to rise up prominently among the British. To understand the development of free choice in this phase, it should be noted here that Edwards’ era belongs to the second period of High orthodoxy which was undergoing significant intellectual transition. During this period, scholastic languages and terms were gradually disappearing in scholarly works.⁶⁸ Moreover, instead of Latin, English which was still ranked as a vernacular language began mainly to be employed for the scholarly

⁶⁶ Turretin, *Institutes* I, X, III, IV-XI.

⁶⁷ See also the case of Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676) in Van Asselt, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 145-170.

⁶⁸ Richard A. Muller, *Post Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* vol. I (Grand Rapids: Baker Book, 2003), 31-32; 73-81.

discourses in England. Thus, the gradual loss of scholastic language and the replacement of Latin with English caused some lack of clarity in the formation of the doctrine of free choice especially in England. This is evident, for example, in Edwards' definition of free choice and his critique of the Arminian concept of freedom as indifference which will be dealt with in the following chapter in detail.

Meanwhile, in the orthodox era, the main lines of the development of philosophy were toward determinism.⁶⁹ Robert Sleight insists that with some exceptions such as Malebranche, "all the major philosophers of the seventeenth century were determinists."⁷⁰ Since Edwards was mainly engaged in a debate with the Arminians and the Socinians concerning the issue, it would be beyond the scope of this study to deal with each philosopher's idea of free choice. Nevertheless, as one such example to highlight the issue, it would be worthwhile briefly examining Thomas Hobbes' (1588-1679) understanding of human freedom because Whitby and his associates commonly identify Reformed doctrine of free choice with Hobbes' philosophical determinism. For instance, Whitby declares that "betwixt the doctrine of Mr. Hobbes, and of these men (Calvinists), concerning this matter, as to the great concernment of religion."⁷¹

⁶⁹ Robert Sleight, Jr., Vere Chappell, and Michael Della Rocca, "Determinism and Human Freedom," in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, ed Garbeer and Ayers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1195. For the debate on human free choice in the 18th century England, see James A. Harris, *Of Liberty and Necessity: The Free Will Debate in Eighteenth-Century British Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005). Concerning the philosophical background of Edwards' era, see Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, 2 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1902); Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 4 & 5 (Westminster, Md.: Newman Bookshop, 1963).

⁷⁰ Sleight, "Determinism and Human Freedom," 1195. He also asserts that the relation between human freedom and divine necessity was one of the most frequently debated issues of the age. Ibid.

⁷¹ Daniel Whitby, *A discourse concerning, I. the true import of the words election and reprobation; and the things signified by them in the Holy Scripture. II. The Extent of Christ's Redemption. III. The Grace of God; where it is enquired, Whether it be vouchsafed sufficiently to those who improve it not, and irresistibly to those who do improve it; and whether Men be wholly passive in the Work of their Regeneration? IV. The Liberty of the Will in a State of Tryal and Probation. V. the perseverance or defectibility of the saints; with some Reflections on the State of Heathens, the Providence and Prescience of God*, (London, 1710), 359. cf. This work is also known as *Five Points* which, for example, John Edwards commonly uses to mention this work. The similar tendency to classify Calvin as a determinist like the case of Hobbes is found in modern scholarship as well. For example, Leopold Damrosch, Jr. "Hobbes as

Hobbes' determinism is quite straightforward. In *Of Liberty and Necessity* (1654), he insists that 'Nothing taketh beginning from itself, but from the action of some other immediate agent without itself.'⁷² Simply speaking, every action has a necessary cause.⁷³ As a materialist who takes only beings to be bodies, and only actions or events to be the motions of bodies, Hobbes also argues that "voluntary actions have all of them necessary causes, and are therefore necessitated" by material substances.⁷⁴ He thus declares that "the will itself, and each propension of a man during his deliberation, is as much necessitated, and depends on a sufficient cause, as any thing else whatsoever."⁷⁵ Consequently, for Hobbes, the activity of human will is merely the last act in a rigid chain of physical causes.

Hobbes' commitment to the doctrine of necessity is also evident in his dealing with God's foreknowledge. In *The Questions Concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance* (1656), he referred to God's foreknowledge to uphold his belief in universal determinism: "It sufficeth me, that whatsoever was foreknown by God, was necessary: but all things were foreknown by God, and therefore all things were necessary."⁷⁶ However, Hobbes

Reformation Theologian: Implications of the Free-Will Controversy" *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 40:3 (1979): 339-352; Jürgen Overhoff, *Hobbes's theory of the will* (Lanham: Rowan and Littlefield, 2000). For the understanding of Hobbes' idea of human freedom, see also Cees Leijenhorst, *The Mechanization of Aristotelianism: the late Aristotelian setting of Hobbes' natural philosophy* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); idem, "Hobbes' Theory of causality and Its Aristotelian Background" *The Monist*, 79:3 (1996): 426-447.

⁷² Thomas Hobbes, *Of Liberty and Necessity*, in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, ed. Sir William Molesworth (London, 1840), 4:274.

⁷³ Cf. He defends liberty as the "absence of all the impediments to action that are not contained in the nature and intrinsical quality of the agent." Hobbes, *Of Liberty and Necessity*, 4:273.

⁷⁴ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. W. G. Pogson Smith (1909; Clarendon Press, 1967), 161. In *Of Liberty and Necessity*, Hobbes presents a almost identical statement: "So that whereas it is out of controversy, that of voluntary actions the will is the necessary cause, and by this which is said, the will is also caused by other things whereof it disposeth not, it followeth, that voluntary actions have all of them necessary causes, and therefore are necessitated." Hobbes, *Of Liberty and Necessity*, 4:274.

⁷⁵ Hobbes, *Of Liberty and Necessity*, 4:247.

⁷⁶ Thomas Hobbes, *The Questions Concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance* in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, ed. Sir William Molesworth (London, 1840), 5:19.

asserts that the will of God is not the whole cause but a partial cause of everything that occurs in the world. For him, the entire cause of every present action is collections of innumerable partial causes extending back to God's creation of all things as the original action.⁷⁷ Finally, Hobbes' assertion of the deterministic hypothesis based upon the law of natural causation in all known phenomena caused a debate with an Arminian bishop, John Bramhall of Derry (1594-1663).

2. Arminianism in Late Seventeenth– and Early Eighteenth–Century England

In order to place Edwards in his own context and understand the background of Edwards' time, it would also be helpful to deal in more detail with the Arminianism among many antagonists of the Reformed in the high orthodoxy era because the Arminians were Edwards' main adversaries on the issue of free choice.

(1) The Rise and Dominance of the New Arminianism in England

One of the most characteristic features of the high orthodoxy period is the rise and dominance of Arminianism in the intellectual context. In this era, Arminianism achieved a considerable growth in the European continent by the influences of leading Remonstrant figures such as Philipp van Limborch (1633-1712), and Jean LeClerc (1657-1736). However, the Arminianism of this era was “no mere replay of earlier doctrinal disputes.” Interacting with the new philosophical and theological movements of the era, it became “a much sturdier and more intellectually developed growth, which proved capable of combinations scarcely dreamt of earlier.”⁷⁸ Regarding the nature of the new Arminianism of the era, Muller states as follows:

⁷⁷ Hobbes, *Of Liberty and Necessity*, 4:246-47, 268; See also Thomas Hobbes, *Of Philosophy* in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, ed. Sir William Molesworth (London, 1840), 1:121-22.

⁷⁸ Nicholas Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism c. 1530-1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 336.

By way of contrast, the Remonstrant theology posed a major threat to the Reformed and called forth new argumentation, since it was, in its beginning, an offshoot of the Reformed system and, in its development, a highly rationalistic structure allied with Cartesian and eventually with Lockean thought. Polemic became particularly bitter over the apparent rapprochement of Remonstrant and Socinian theologians on issues related to the work of Christ and the divine justice. Similarly, there was intense debate over the relationship of Remonstrant thought to rationalism, inasmuch as Cartesian philosophy, the reigning new philosophical movement of the age, had also made inroads into Reformed theology among the federal theologians. Here, the near contact between the Reformed and their Remonstrant opponents was most obvious. The Remonstrant system had retained some strong resemblances to the Reformed system, and especially in the area of the federal doctrines had developed a dispensational structure close to that argued by Cocceius and his followers.⁷⁹

Arminianism and doctrine of like tendency rapidly crept onto British soil as well.

Reformed theology evidently “continued to ring out loud and clear” in England up until the late 1620s. However, in spite of the banishment of the Arminians from the high ground through the Civil War and the defeat of the royalists, an Arminian faction had resurged during the 1650s, and it soon permeated all the land of England in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries.⁸⁰ Concerning the rise of Arminianism in England, Tyacke states as follows:

Calvinism might still survive in Oxford, but elsewhere Arminianism had emerged supreme. During the 1660s an aggressive brand of anti-Calvinism had rapidly become established at Cambridge University, and Archbishop Sheldon increasingly lent his authority to such views in the English Church more generally. Meanwhile the public affirmation of the English Calvinist heritage was left almost exclusively to dissenters... The apotheosis of this long term development was achieved in the 1690s with the triumph of religious ‘latitudinarianism’ which was clearly Arminian in its theological emphases. In this context Bishop Gilbert Burnet’s *Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles*, published in 1699, both outlined the rise and fall of English Calvinism and set the seal on the new Arminian dispensation.⁸¹

Indeed, the change of the religious climate in England at the University of Cambridge, where Edwards was once a fellow, was one evident example of the dominance of

⁷⁹ Muller, *PRRD* I, 75-76.

⁸⁰ Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism*, 322. Edwards himself notices “the mischievous progress of the Arminian doctrines among us.” Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, i.

⁸¹ Tyacke, “Religious Controversy,” 617.

Arminianism in England. Even though Reformed tradition still survived in Oxford even after 1660s, the situation at Cambridge was remarkably different.⁸² Tyacke states that “At Cambridge, by contrast, any such inhibitions were rapidly shed and by the mid 1670s at the least a full-blooded Arminianism emerged as the order of the day; indeed what had passed for orthodoxy under King James was now stood on its head.”⁸³

Almost the only one Calvinist left at Cambridge was John Edwards, and by his efforts, the Calvinist flame was barely surviving at Cambridge.⁸⁴ Concerning this situation, Tyacke states that “Judging by his various autobiographical remarks, Edwards found very few like-minded spirits among leading Cambridge academics.”⁸⁵ Edwards

⁸² For the case of Oxford University, there were several Calvinist professors such as Thomas Barlow, William Jane (the Regius professor of divinity, 1680-1707), and John Hall (Lady Margaret professor of divinity, 1676-1690). This shows the ongoing influence of the Reformed Anglicans at the university until at least the end of the century (1680-1691). However, the appointments of Arminian Professors such as Richard Allestree (the Regius professor of divinity 1663-1680) and Thomas Pierce (president of Magdalen College) indicate a sign of a strong Arminian growth at the university. Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism*, 325. Concerning the religious identity in Cambridge before Restoration, see David Hoyle, *Reformation and Religious in Cambridge, 1590-1644* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007).

⁸³ Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism*, 324. Tyacke more specifically writes that “[In Cambridge] No attempt was made at balancing rival points of view, and disagreement where it existed, had to be shrouded in silence. These differences are all the more striking in that at both universities during the 1650s Calvinism had been the official orthodoxy, as can be seen from the divinity theses maintained respectively at the Oxford Act and Cambridge Commencement. The professorships of Richard Love (the Cambridge Lady Margaret professor of divinity) and Anthony Tuckney were replaced by Peter Gunning and John Pearson. Especially a series of surviving volumes of chaotic scribbblings show that the Cambridge Arminian pattern was already established during the 1660s.” Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism*, 324. Tyacke also ascribes one main reason for the sudden change of the religious atmosphere in England to the appearance of Arminian professors in both Oxford and Cambridge universities: “By this period the English clergy were an almost entirely graduate profession, which meant that the vast majority had at least a first degree from either Oxford or Cambridge. Those with a more serious interest in theology went on, via the MA, to the degree of BD and perhaps ultimately a DD as well. For them the outlook of the professoriate was of potentially great importance, helping to shape and direct their own courses of study.” Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism*, 323.

⁸⁴ After he retired in 1686, Edwards made the press rather than the pulpit till his death in 1716 in order to diffuse his opinions. Besides Edwards’ effort, in spite of the Cambridge Arminians’ efforts to cut off this rival Calvinist source, a Calvinist commentary on the Thirty-nine Articles, by Thomas Rogers, was reprinted at Cambridge in 1691 by John Hayes in its revised form. Thomas Rogers, *The Faith, Doctrine and Religion, Professed and Protected in the Realm of England* (Cambridge, 1691). It was originally published at Cambridge in 1608 to refute emergent anti-Calvinism of the day and ran through numerous early editions and republications. Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism*, 332; idem, *Anti-Calvinists*, 25-7.

also recognizes the dominance of Arminianism in England and states that “it can’t be denied that the opposite opinions are very plausible and popular, especially as they are dress’d up by the same men’s hands. Arminianism is the favourite doctrine of these times.”⁸⁶ This desperate situation for the Reformed tradition at Cambridge and almost all parts of British land eventually resulted in the controversy between Edwards and Whitby.

(2) The Debate with Daniel Whitby

As noted already, the doctrine of free choice was a key issue in the confessional debates from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.⁸⁷ The adversaries of the Reformed such as the Jesuits, the Remonstrants and the Socinians complained that the Reformed account of free choice, predestination, and providence imply Stoic fatalism (determinism). By contrast, Reformed thinkers, in turn, accused them of Pelagianism (human autonomy).⁸⁸ The pivotal issue of the debates of the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth century was the relation of divine sovereignty, grace, and sin to the freedom of human choice.

Among those controversies, Edwards’ debate with Daniel Whitby (1638-1726) should receive particular attention because it directly confronts the issue of human freedom and divine necessity.⁸⁹ Daniel Whitby (1638-1726) was a polemical Church of

⁸⁵ Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism*, 325-26. See also, Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 555; idem, *Arminian Doctrines*, 114-15.

⁸⁶ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 123. Cf. Edwards summarizes the tradition of Calvinism in England and states that “the name of Calvinism, have been receiv’d and believ’d, held and profess’d by the clergy and people of the Church of England ever since the Reformation, and a considerable time before it.” Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 512-558; 512.

⁸⁷ Van Asselt, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 17.

⁸⁸ Van Asselt, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 17. For the general overview of the controversies on divine grace in the 16th and 17th century England, see Wallace, *Puritans and Predestination*.

⁸⁹ In the preface of *Arminian Condemn’d*, he clearly mentions that Dr. Whitby is his main adversary. Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, i. Cf. Wallace notes that “Foremost among those who rejected Calvinism had been the Arminians, and Edwards comes on the scene as a defender of Calvinism against Arminianism at a time when it was more often the Dissenters who were battling it and calling attention to

England divine and writer whose *Paraphrase and Commentary on the New Testament* (1702) gave him a reputation for biblical and linguistic learning.⁹⁰ He first gained public attention by his anti-Romanist tracts, such as *The Idolatry of Host Worship* (1679).⁹¹ However, basically following the Arminian theology of his day throughout his career,⁹² Whitby spent much of his career indignantly protesting the Calvinistic doctrine of God:

A God of absolute sovereignty, who by virtue of his prerogative over his creatures, can pass an act of reprobation on the generality of mankind, when he had equal reason to make them as well as any others, vessels of election. . . is a predestinarian idol, God being incapable of exercising any such sovereignty over his creatures, which is repugnant to his rich grace, goodness, love, mercy, and compassion.⁹³

the triumph of Arminianism in the Church of England. Attacking Arminianism was also a shift from his assaults on such looming threats of a new era such as those on Socinians, Deists, and Atheists, to an old nemesis of Puritans and Calvinists.” Wallace, *Shaper of English Calvinism*, cccxxxiii.

⁹⁰ For example, this two volume works was highly acclaimed by Philip Doddridge (the dissenter, and protégé and literary executor of Isaac Watts) as “preferable to all others.” Quoted from Paul Ramsey, “Editor’s Introduction,” in Jonathan Edwards, *Freedom of the Will in Works of Jonathan Edwards* vol. 1 ed. Paul Ramsey (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1957), 81. For the detailed information of the life and works of Daniel Whitby, see Jean-Louis Quantin, “Daniel Whitby,” in *The Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford; New York :Oxford University Press,2004), 58:530-532.

⁹¹ In his earlier career, Whitby also became known for the publication of *The Protestant Reconciler, Humbly Pleading for Condescension to Dissenting Brethren, in things indifferent and unnecessary for the sake of peace, and shewing how unreasonable it is to make such things the necessary conditions of communion* (1682) which deals with the issue of schism and Dissenters in the Church of England.

⁹² However, Whitby went beyond this position at the end of his career. Whitby’s posthumous publication of *Retractation* evidences that he was ended up with Unitarianism or Arianism. Ramsey, “Editor’s Introduction,” 82; Redwood, *Reason, Ridicule and Religion*, 160. Concerning Whitby’s theological journey, Edwards insists that receiving 7 years Calvinistic education at Trinity University, Whitby began his career as a Calvinist. However, Edwards claims that after reading Joshua Placaeus (1596-1665), Whitby abandoned the Reformed doctrine of original sin and this was “the spring of all his other disorders.” Edwards continues that the influence of a physician (Edwards mentions this person anonymously) made Whitby finally take all the Arminian doctrines and give himself up wholly to “the deist and physician who have ever since been the directors of his judgment and conscience in these matters.” Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, xvi. Joshua Placaeus was a professor at Saumur who fell into some of the errors of the Remonstrants. Later he was condemned by the Synod at Charenton and by the Divinity professor of Leiden. Ibid.

⁹³ Daniel Whitby, *Sermons on the Attributes of God* (London, 1710), 39. Concerning this, Guelzo also points out that “Whitby seems to have spent most of his life in search of a God palatable to enlightened eighteenth-century opinion. His tracts against both Roman Catholics and Calvinists were inspired not so much by a sense of their particular errors as by the fear that both were an embarrassment to polite religion.” Allen C. Guelzo, *Edwards on the Will: A Century of American Theological Debate* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1989), 60.

In 1710, Whitby became engaged in the debate with John Edwards by publishing *A Discourse* and *Four Discourses*.⁹⁴ In these works, generally maintaining Arminianism in orientation,⁹⁵ Whitby attacks Edwards' *Veritas Redux* which supports the five articles of the Synod of Dort. Especially, with "a tessellation" of quotations from the Bible and the early Church Fathers, he argues that none of these doctrines that Edwards espouses in *Veritas Redux* was maintained before Augustine and they are novel doctrines borrowed from medieval scholasticism.⁹⁶ Portraying Calvinism as outdated and rare among the Church of England divines, Whitby also criticizes that in his defense of "Calvinistical doctrines," Edwards "cordially embraces the Doctrine of Mr. Hobbs, and the Turks."⁹⁷

As a response to Whitby, Edwards writes *The Arminian Doctrines Condemn'd by the Holy Scriptures, By Many Ancient Fathers, By the Church of England, and even by the Suffrage of Right Reason* in 1711 to refute Whitby's *A Discourse* and *Four*

⁹⁴ The second edition of the former work was published in London, 1735 with the same title as that of the first one, containing an additional Discourse VI and a Postscript in reply to John Edwards' refutation of Whitby's earlier arguments and Whitby's exposition of biblical texts relevant to the controversy, respectively. The original title of the latter work is *Four discourses shewing, I. That the Apostle's words, Romans the ninth, have no relation to any personal election or reprobation. II. That the Election, mentioned in St. Paul's Epistles to the Gentiles, is only that of the Gentiles to be God's Church and People. III. That these Two Assertions of Dr. John Edwards, viz. (1.) That God's Fore-Knowledge of all Futurities depends on his Decree, and that he fore-knows them, because he hath decreed them. (2.) That God did, from all Eternity, decree the Commission of all the Sins in the World, are False, Blasphemous, and render God the Author of Sin. IV. Being a Vindication of my Annotations from the Doctor's Cavils. To which is added, as an appendix, a short answer to the Doctor's Discourse concerning the fixed term of human life* (London, 1710). Unlike *A Discourse* which deals with five general tenets of Arminianism against the Reformed, *Four Discourses* focuses more on the specific two issues whether God's foreknowledge of future contingencies depends on God's decree and whether God has willed the sin of mankind from eternity.

⁹⁵ However, it should be also noted that his discourse in this work reflects a gradual development in Arminianism during the century since the Remonstrance (1610). For example, in *A Discourses*, Whitby staunchly denies the imputation of Adam's sin to the rest of mankind which had already carried him beyond the earlier Arminian position.

⁹⁶ This point will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

⁹⁷ Whitby, *Four Discourse*, ii, iv. Whitby assigns a section on "Shewing the affinity of the opinions of our adversaries concerning liberty, with that of Mr. Hobbs, and with the Fate of the philosophers; condemned by the Christian Fathers" in *A Discourse*, 359-373. It was a common charge of anti-Calvinists against the Reformed. See Wallace, *Puritans and Predestination*, 124-25.

Discourses.⁹⁸ This work is largely aimed to defend the Reformed doctrine of God's foreknowledge and predestination especially with reference to the commission of sin against the objections which Whitby harshly raised in his works against Edwards. However, as a systematic rebuttal of Arminianism in general, it also deals with other highly provocative theological issues such as whether the liberty of will is in indifference or whether divine foreknowledge removes human free choice.⁹⁹ One main issue in the first part of this work is particularly whether the Church Fathers before Augustine taught these Reformed doctrines that Edwards espouses in *Veritas Redux*.¹⁰⁰ However, Edwards

⁹⁸ This work consists of two parts. The aforementioned title is the title of first part of the work and the second part is entitled as *An Answer to Dr. Whitby's Second Pretended Defence of the Arminian Doctrines, in his Four Discourses, as he calls them* (1710). The first part mainly targets Whitby's *A Discourse* while the second part aims at Whitby's *Four Discourses*. Edwards states that "(chiefly framed to or aimed) my main business at present, is to return an answer to that part of Dr. Whitby's late discourse on the Five Points, which he calls a postscript.... But it is his late book concerning the Five Points that I am chiefly concern'd in at present, wherein he hath signally contradicted the Church of England's received Articles, and opposed her most avowed principles." Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 1-2. See also *Ibid.*, xv. Edwards clearly writes in the "Introduction" of the second part that "After I had prepared the foregoing papers for the press, Dr. Whitby's *Four Discourses* (for so he entitles them) came to my hands, wherein he apologizes for himself, ... Now therefore, in a late pamphlet he sends me a new challenge; and, with banners display'd, he appears openly, to combat me. ... But it will be expected that something should be said, because of his loud clamours of blasphemy, horrid blasphemy, which he so fiercely and so frequently bellows out against me..." Edwards, *Arminian Doctrine*, 119-120. Another work of Edwards written against Arminianism was *A Letter to the Reverend Lawrence Fogg* (1715). Here, Edwards castigates Fogg (the Dean of Chester)'s Arminian argument that predestination was based on God's foresight of future contingency. Edwards, *A Letter to the Reverend Lawrence Fogg, D. D. and Dean of Chester* (London, 1715), 8-9, 15.

⁹⁹ Edwards criticizes Whitby's *A Discourse* as "A great part of it is no other than a nauseous repetition of what he had deliver'd before in his annotations, as the reader may be convinced by comparing paragraph with paragraph, and given page with page sometimes. Throughout the whole there is nothing but the old Arminian cant over and over again. Hoard, of God's love to mankind is his perpetual fund and magazine..." Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, xv.

¹⁰⁰ Since Edwards' arguments against Whitby in *The Arminian Doctrine Condemn'd* will be substantially dealt with in the following chapters, it is not necessary to discuss them here. However, to understand the intensity of the debate between Edwards and Whitby, it needs to be noted here that overall tone of Edwards' criticism of Whitby's *A Discourse* was very severe in this work. For example, Edwards writes that "I never met with a man that made a greater noise of learning and reading, and yet hath a lesser share of them, and abuses and perverts them more, than the doctor..." Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 119-120. He also states that "... he is a plagiarist; and where there is anything of his own, he is very fallacious and tricking, and plays the sophister, and perverts the Words of the Scripture to serve his humour. It is true, he is a great pains-taker, and may be said to slave at the work of book-making: But the labour consists chiefly in transcribing and in repetitions. Of this latter the instances are almost innumerable: whole pages in his annotations, and in his other writings, are twice, yea thrice, and even four times over repeated, as the observing reader will find: so that he is a double plagiarist, he steals not only from others, but from himself." Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, xii. Finally, Edwards concludes that Whitby's *A Discourse* is full of "his

states that “there is not any one argument in it which was not foreseen and before-hand answered in my *Veritas Redux*; and therefore I shall not now be guilty of that fault which I blame in him, that is, needless repetition.”¹⁰¹ Accordingly, Edwards refrained from further debate with Whitby:

I will let the controversy sleep and rest, and leave the event of it to the conduct of divine providence in after-times. For though what I have written doth not agree with the general taste of our divines in this age, yet I despair not of a future generation, that will shew they have another spirit and character. ... But at present, it is in vain to set one’s self against a torrent; and therefore I will give my self repose: and having discharged my conscience and duty, and delivered my soul, in bearing testimony to the truths which are rejected in this age, I will cause all acts of hostility to cease on my part, and I will sacrifice the further urging of my sentiments to the love of peace. In a word; I will answer all the future objections, insults and obloquies of my adversaries, with silence and contempt, unless there shall be an absolute necessity of justifying myself.¹⁰²

After all, even though Whitby’s reply to Edwards was found in his second edition of *A Discourse* (1735), there was no more response to Whitby by Edwards until his death. However, Reformed orthodoxy’s concern over Whitby’s work did not disappear yet. When *A Discourse* was reprinted about the year 1735,¹⁰³ the Particular Baptist, John Gill (1697-1771) began to work on *The Cause of God and Truth* and separately published it in four volumes from 1735-1738. In this work, in spite of the loss of the use of the delicate scholastic philosophical or theological distinctions and concepts, Gill’s arguments against Whitby basically stand in strong continuity with his Reformed predecessors and show many similarities to those of Edwards.¹⁰⁴

ungrammaticalness, his quibbling, and his nonsense, and his bordering on prophaneness.” Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, xiii.

¹⁰¹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, xv.

¹⁰² Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 124.

¹⁰³ Concerning the influence of Whitby’s *A Discourse*, Rippon says that “It was judged to be a master-piece on the subject in the English tongue; and extolled as unanswerable; and almost every opponent of the Calvinists asked, Why do you not answer Dr. Whitby?” John Rippon, *A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late Rev. John Gill, D. D.* (The Baptist Standard Bearer, 1999), 25.

In addition to Edwards and Gill, American theologian Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) also responded to Whitby's second edition of *A Discourse* by publishing *Freedom of the Will* in 1754.¹⁰⁵ Edwards here attempts to refute Whitby's notion that the human will possesses libertarian autonomy and to show that a universe in which all events have been determined by God is compatible with human liberty or moral accountability. Nevertheless, unlike Edwards and Gill, Jonathan Edwards' deviation from the classic Reformed thought on human freedom and its relation with divine necessity is quite clear, for example, in his denial of freedom of contrariety and contradiction, and in the loss of traditional understanding of the decision process through the interaction between the intellect and the will.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ It is beyond the scope of this study to deal with Gill's arguments in detail or to thoroughly compare his arguments with those of Edwards. However, Gill's insinuations would be intermittently introduced in the main discussions of this dissertation in order to highlight Edwards' argument and this comparison would help understand the similarities between Gill and Edwards.

¹⁰⁵ Original title of this work is *A Careful and Strict Enquiry into the Modern Prevailing Notions of that Freedom of Will, which is supposed to be essential to Moral Agency, Vertue and Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise, and Blame. Edwards's book was directed to Englishmen as well as to Americans* (Boston, 1754). In this work, Edwards attacks five main adversaries: two Anglican clergymen (Daniel Whitby and Samuel Clarke), a dissenting minister (Isaac Watts), and a popular writer on Deism (Thomas Chubb).

¹⁰⁶ This also goes beyond the boundary of this study. However, I suggest the comparison between John Edwards, John Gill and Jonathan Edwards on human freedom as another good topic to study because it would significantly contribute to the scholarship on the Reformed doctrine of free choice, especially by highlighting the transition in the later generation of Reformed orthodoxy. 29,102-3. For the subtle differences between Edwardsean concept of human will and classical Reformed/Calvinist concept of human will, see James Dana, *The "Examination of the Late Rev'd President Edwards' Enquiry on Freedom of Will" Continued* (New Haven, 1773); John L. Girardeau, *The Will in its Theological Relations* (New York: The Baker & Taylor Co., 1891); William Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1979), 471-524; Allen C. Guelzo, *Edwards on the Will: A Century of American Theological Debate* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1989); Elton John Holtrop, "Edwards' Conception of the Will in the Light of Calvinistic Philosophy" (Ph.D. Thesis, Western Reserve University, 1948). For an introduction to this modern Edwardsean concept, see C. Samuel Storms, "Jonathan Edwards on the Freedom of the Will," *Trinity Journal* 3 (1982): 131-69.

PART II: THE DOCTRINE OF FREE CHOICE

Chapter 3: Edwards' View of the Nature of Free Choice

I. Edwards' Understanding of Human Beings

1. Human Beings as the Image of God

According to Edwards, man is “the greatest wonder, and master-piece of this lower world, for he consists not only of a body, but a rational spirit.”¹ He argues that both a body and a soul prove the existence of God.² In particular, Edwards insists that man was created in the image of God because “the spirit or mind of man is a lively representation of the nature of God himself.”³ In other words, the soul of man is “the resemblance of divinity, and bears the very mark and impress of the almighty on it.”⁴ Edwards cites Genesis 1:27 to support God’s creation of humanity in His own image, and, on the basis of Ephesians 4:24 and Colossian 3:10, he argues that the image of God

¹ John Edwards, *Theologia Reformata: or, The Body and Substance of the Christian Religion, Comprised in distinct Discourses or treatises upon The Apostles Creed, The Lord’s prayer, and The Ten Commandments in two volumes*. Vol. I. (London: 1713), 13. Edwards however insists that the wonders of the soul are far greater than those of the body. Ibid.

² For Edwards, the human body’s excellent shape and function, and wise arrangement testify the existence of God. Edwards deals with the proof of a deity through the frame of human bodies in detail in *A Demonstration of the Existence and Providence of God from the Greater and Lesser World: in two parts, the first shewing the excellent contrivance of the heavens, earth, sea, &c., the second the wonderful formation of the body of man*. (London, 1696). Throughout the work, Edwards highly appreciates the excellence of human bodies. For instance, he states that “Man is the most perfect of all animals, the parts of his body are most exquisite and admirable.” Ibid., part II, 2-3.

³ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 13.

⁴ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 14. Edwards does not clearly mention whether human body also reflects the image of God or not. For John Calvin, even though man is called the *imago dei* with respect to the soul, the *imago dei* extends beyond the soul in a much broader sense. He states that “though I retain the principle which I lately laid down, that the image of God extends to everything in which the nature of man surpasses that of all other species of animals ... and although the primary seat of the divine image was in the mind and heart, or in the soul and its powers, yet there was no part of man, not even the body itself, in which some sparks did not glow.” John Calvin, *Institutes of Christian Religion*, ed. John McNeill & trans. E L. Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1950), I. xv. 3.

consists in “holiness and righteousness.”⁵ In his writings, however, Edwards does not provide a further detailed explanation of the image of God in human beings.

2. The Nature of Human Soul

For Edwards, the soul (*anima*) is the principle of human actions. He defines human soul as follows:

When I name the soul of man, I mean by it an understanding spirit fitted for the reception of truth, desirous of it and delighted in it. I mean an intellectual being that is calculated for the knowledge of God and of religion, that is endued with faculties which can distinguish good from evil, and have power to act accordingly; I mean a being that hath such endowments and functions as render it serviceable not only to religious and holy purposes, but those that are secular and common.⁶

Edwards distinguishes powers or functions of the soul into two sorts: rational and sensitive (animal) ones. He teaches that the animal faculty is really different from the rational one and the former is inferior to the latter.⁷ Edwards, therefore, calls the rational

⁵ John Edwards, *The Socinian Creed: or A Brief Account of the Professed Tenents and Doctrines of the Foreign and English Socinians. Wherein is shew'd the Tendency of them to Irreligion and Athesim. With Proper Antidotes against them* (London: 1697), 75. Thus, Edwards refutes Socinian idea that Adam and Eve did not possess any positive moral goodness and righteousness. Ibid.

⁶ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 14. Edwards states that the brain is “the seat of the soul.” Edwards, *A Demonstration of the Existence and Providence of God*, part II, 12.

⁷ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 17. Edwards distinguishes the difference between them as follows: “the humane soul is both rational and sensitive, it is the former as it exerts pure intellectual or rational acts; it is the latter as it operates on the body, or is operated upon by it, for as the body hath power to act on the soul, so the soul hath a power to act on the body. Now, accordingly as the soul acts or is acted upon, it hath the denomination of rational or sensitive, and may as it were be considered (in respect of such different acts as are observed in it) as a double soul, as consisting of two parts. Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 19.” In this chapter, however, I will focus only on rational faculty of the soul which is related to the nature of free choice. Edwards deals with animal faculty of the soul in detail in *Theologia Reformata I*, 18-22.

and sensitive faculties as “superior” and “inferior” ones, respectively.⁸ He also classifies the vegetative faculty under the sensitive one.⁹

(1) The Intellect

As with other Reformed theologians, Edwards views human beings as rational creatures: mind-gifted nature (*natura intelligens*). Thus, he frequently uses the expressions, “the rational soul” and “the rational life of man.”¹⁰ This simply means that it belongs to human beings’ essence to have the capacity of knowing, understanding and judging.

Edwards states that all superior faculties of the soul are reduced to understanding and will.¹¹ Thus, he teaches that the rational soul of humanity consists of understanding and will. In other words, for Edwards, “it is plain that there are but two grand capital powers or functions of the rational soul, viz. knowledge and appetite, or perception and volition.”¹² Here we can clearly see that Edwards follows the traditional Aristotelian ‘faculty psychology’ which teaches that the main rational capacities of the soul are knowing and willing.¹³

⁸ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 17. In spite of their distinct natures, however, Edwards points out some similarity between them: “This inferior power of the soul imitates the superiour faculty. As there are in the former the intellect and will... so there are in the latter some resemblances of these, for we find in it a kind of cognoscitive and appetitive power, or as they are more generally stiled, imagination, and sensitive appetite.” Ibid, 18.

⁹ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 14. He defines the vegetative faculty as one “whereby the natural and vital functions in the body are performed.” Ibid.

¹⁰ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 16-18.

¹¹ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 14.

¹² Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 18.

¹³ Concerning this tradition, Muller writes that “Faculty psychology, with its characteristic distinction of spiritual life into the faculties of intellect and will, or, more precisely, of the soul into four faculties-intellect, will, sensitive power, and vegetative power-had its roots in Aristotle and became, in the thirteenth century development of a Christian Aristotelianism, the dominant view of spiritual or rational existence.” Muller also states that this model continued to be accepted by Reformation and Post Reformation Reformed thinkers. Richard A. Muller, *God, creation, and providence in the thought of Jacob*

Edwards calls understanding as the intellectual faculty and distinguishes it into nine sorts: Simple apprehension or a bare perception of the objects, reason (rationation), judgment, wisdom, providence, the fancy (imagination), the memory, conscience, and contemplation (meditation).¹⁴ Among these nine levels of understanding, Edwards explains the process of judgment of the intellect as follows: According to him, after the intellect percepts things in themselves and forms a naked idea of them, the soul “apprehends things proposed to it, joins notion together, and collects others from them.” Edwards calls this as “discursive or dianoetick power of the soul whereby it is able to infer one thing from another, and to draw conclusions from them.” After the soul goes through the process of the rationation, it moves the next step, judgment. It involves the function of the “deliberate and sober weighing of things, and notions together, and its judging and censuring accordingly.” Edwards, therefore, insists that the intellect is an active faculty of the soul.¹⁵

(2) The Will

Edwards defines the will as the faculty “whereby we embrace or disgust any thing, according as it was concluded right or wrong, good or evil, by our judging faculty.”¹⁶ Edwards elaborates three characteristics of the will: (1) its inclination, (2) its freedom and choice, and (3) its dominion and sovereignty.

Arminius: sources and directions of scholastic Protestantism in the era of early orthodoxy (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1991), 143. Cf. Gisbertus Voetius insists that “Facultates animae rationalis qua talis duae sunt: intellectus & voluntas.” Gisbertus Voetius, *Selectae disputationes theologiae* vol. I (Utrecht, 1648-1669), 835.

¹⁴ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 14-16.

¹⁵ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 15. Edwards criticizes those who insist that the intellect only receives the ideas of things and so it is a purely passive faculty. He particularly mentions Nicholas Malebranche (1638-1715) and chapter I of his work, *The Search after Truth and Elucidations* (1712) as an example. Ibid. For Edwards, the will is also active faculty of the soul. Ibid.

¹⁶ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 16.

First, Edwards teaches that the inclination of the will consists of two parts: “appetition and aversion.” More specifically, it is “a rational appetite carried towards that which reason presents as good; or else turned away from that which was represented to it as evil.”¹⁷ As noted in the above quotation, Edwards maintains that will is a rational faculty. For him, it is the will that makes the choice regarding the practical intellect. Edwards states that “So to these two are answerable in the will, first a desire, which is a kind of affirmation; secondly avoiding, which is a kind of negation.”¹⁸ Therefore, the rationality of the will is seen in the choices that it makes. That is, the will as *arbitrium* functions rationally.¹⁹

Secondly, concerning freedom and choice of the will, Edwards claims that the rational soul cannot be coerced. For him, freedom is the intrinsic nature of the soul. That is to say, the soul possesses “an inbred and native, principle whereby it acts freely, and is not capable of compulsion.” Edwards also argues that its freedom and choice is “the immediate root” of all moral behaviors.²⁰ In sum, for Edwards, “Liberty is of the intrinsic nature of the soul, it hath an elective power which is inseparable from it.”²¹

Thirdly, with regard to the nature of dominion and sovereignty of the will, Edwards holds that the will of man cannot be usurped by anyone. For him, the will is able

¹⁷ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 16-17.

¹⁸ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 17.

¹⁹ Even though intellect is often regarded as primarily the rational part of the soul in the western intellectual history, there is also a voluntarist tradition that ascribes rational function to the will. Concerning the voluntaristic tradition, see Vernon Bourke, *Will in Western Thought: A Historico-Critical Survey* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1964), especially 55-71; Hannah Arendt, *The Life of Mind*, 2 vols. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1978), 85-146; Wilhelm Kahl, *Die Lehre vom Primat des Willens bei Augustinus, Duns Scotus und Descartes* (Strassburg: Trubner, 1886); Bernardine M Bonansea, “Duns Scotus Voluntarism” in *John Duns Scotus, 1265-1965*, ed. Ryan and Bonansea (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1965), 83-121.

²⁰ Regarding this, Edwards states that “After the understanding hath made a right discovery of things, the will freely agrees to them, and there is a rational choice, and then the action is truly moral; for when the rational appetite desires that which the reason affirms, flies from that which reason denies, then result honesty, virtue, goodness.” Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 17.

²¹ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 17.

to “stand firm to its own inclination, notwithstanding the most violent shocks from without; yea, and notwithstanding any principle within.” Edwards therefore asserts that even “the greatest tyrants” have no power to coerce the true bent of the will.²²

(3) The Relation between the Intellect and the Will

As with other Reformed thinkers, Edwards teaches that intellect and will work together in free choice.²³ He states that “As the work of the understanding is to distinguish truth from error, and virtue from vice, so that of the will is to choose the one, and reject the other; the divine framer of all things hath made the will to follow the understanding.”²⁴ Indeed, Edwards holds that the will follows the intellect. However, this expression is not to be understood as implying that reason rules the will in such a way that it necessarily does what reason suggests as the good and true. This would destroy the concept of free choice and the will’s office to choose whether to follow what reason suggests.²⁵ It is important to note that, according to Edwards, the will is not determined by the intellect when it follows the intellect.²⁶ Rather, he clearly maintains the priority of the will over the intellect. That is, with respect to priority of faculty, Edwards holds to a primarily voluntarist view of man.

Here, we need to clarify the definition of two terms: “voluntarism” and “intellectualism.” The ideas of voluntarism and intellectualism come from medieval

²² Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 17.

²³ Even though one can notice some variations among the traditional Reformed writers, they agree that the will and the intellect work together in free choice. Willem J. J. Van Asselt, Martin Bac and Roelf T. te Velde, eds. *Reformed Thought on Freedom: The Concept of Free Choice in the History of Early-Modern Reformed Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2009), 46.

²⁴ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 16. Edwards also states that “The intellect apprehends and judges concerning the nature of things, whether they be true or false, whether they be good or evil: but by virtue of the will we either prosecute or avoid those things which we have a perception and apprehension of.” *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁵ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 17.

²⁶ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 16-17.

faculty psychology of the soul that has its roots in Aristotle.²⁷ Traditionally, intellectualism and voluntarism refer to what is the ruling faculty or defining power of the human soul between intellect and will.²⁸ That is, voluntarism indicates the functional priority of the will over the intellect.²⁹ On the contrary, intellectualism signifies the functional priority of the intellect over the will.³⁰

Edwards' voluntarism becomes evident in his view of the relation between the intellect and will. Edwards clearly considers the will to be the dominant faculty.³¹ He states:

For it hath a dominion over the other chief power of the soul, the intellect. For tho' (as it was said before) the will was made to follow the understanding, and it is generally and for the most part true, that the judgment and persuasion move the will more or less, yet they must not be thought to compel it, because that will destroy the

²⁷ See Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, 9 vols. (Garden City: Image Books, 1985), I, 328-29; II, 289, 376-83, 538-41; III, 100; Dewey Houtenga, Jr., *John Calvin and the Will: A Critique and Corrective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1997), 24. Concerning the history of the terms, Bonansea says in a footnote, "Although the term 'voluntarism' is of recent coinage, it has been used by historians to designate Scotus' philosophy and distinguish it from the intellectualism of St. Thomas Aquinas. The term was used for the first time by Ferdinand Tönnis in his article, 'Studien zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des Spinoza,' *Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche philosophie*, 7 (1883), 169." Bonansea, "Duns Scotus Voluntarism," 83.

²⁸ Richard Muller states that in order to figure out the range of the meaning of the terms intellectualism and voluntarism, one should exclude "colloquial meanings" which indicate "excessive ratiocination in theology on the one hand and to an emphasis on freedom of choice on the other." Richard A. Muller, "Fides and Cognitio in Relation to the Problem of Intellect and Will in the Theology of John Calvin," *Calvin Theological Journal* 25 (1990), 211.

²⁹ Richard Taylor, "Voluntarism," in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 8 vols. Ed. Paul Edwards, (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 270-272; see also Muller, "Fides and Cognitio," 211.

³⁰ Muller also states that "In a technical theological and philosophical sense, however, intellectualism indicates a view of soul that denominates intellect the nobler of the two faculties because it is the intellect that apprehends the final vision of God as being and truth. Whereas voluntarism would denominate the will as the nobler faculty and assume that its ultimate cleaving to God as the *summum bonum* addresses the highest object of human love, the intellectualist position argues that such union with God is possible only when the intellectual vision of the divine essence has been attained and the connection between the divine essence and all "particular goods" is perceived." Muller, "Fides and Cognitio," 211-12. Concerning this distinction, see also Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Random House, 1956), 242-44; Frederick C. Copleston, *Aquinas* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1955), 184-85. However, the question of which faculty is nobler is not part of my discussion, though an answer to this question is needed to have a complete account of the primacy of the will or intellect.

³¹ Edwards states that "The will is the great ruler of men's actions and lives..." Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* III, 31.

free and elective operation of the soul. And besides, it is not to be doubted that sometimes the will goes against the judgment; the soul wills not with understanding; yea, hath no hint at all from it, as in some very strange actions. And on the contrary, it is not to be denied that sometimes there are very eminent acts of virtue and piety proceeding from an impetuous will and choice without any previous dictates of the intellectual part;³²

Edwards' voluntarism is also apparent in his denomination of the will as the nobler faculty:

Whence it is apparent that the faculty of willing is more noble and excellent than that of the understanding, because in its acting it depends not so much on external objects as the other doth, for the mind in willing is more a mistress of this than of the other: And besides, it is rendered more perfect by this operation than by the other. And this must needs be of a nobler nature than the other, because it is that which the other tends to, and ultimately aims at, for principles and all the attendants of it are in order to choice.³³

In this way, Edwards places will prior to intellect in the inward human causality and thus he follows the voluntarist tradition which both Augustinian and Scotist psychologies belong to.

Accordingly, it is evident for Edwards that intellect and will work together in harmony, though the will has a functional priority over the intellect. He states that "the elective faculty hath the start of reason, and outruns it, but afterwards they meet together, and friendly unite."³⁴ Edwards, thus, teaches that there is no real and essential distinction between them from the soul itself. That is, as for him, the will and the intellect are "not perhaps the faculties really distinct from one another." Edwards instead claims that there are "only modal differences of the same soul." He argues that "all these operations and functions are the same soul, understanding and willing (for unto these two all the rest are

³² Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 17. Unlike Edwards, Calvin affirms the intellectualism in the prelapsarian state of human beings. For example, Calvin states that the office of the intellect is "to distinguish between objects according as they seem deserving of being approved or disapproved; and the office of the will, to choose and follow what the intellect declares to be good, to reject and shun what it declares to be bad... Let it be enough to know that the intellect is to us, as it were, the guide and ruler of the soul; that the will always follows its beck, and waits for its decision, in matters of desire." Calvin, *Institute*, I.xv. 7.

³³ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 16.

³⁴ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 17.

to be reduced) these two make but one rational faculty...”³⁵ In sum, according to Edwards, intellect and will are inseparable at the ontological level though they are distinguished by the different objects offered to the faculties.³⁶

Nonetheless, Edwards also claims that the will can function in extraordinary way because of “plain impresses of divinity on the soul of man.”³⁷ He states:

But even then when natural reason goes not before, and holds not the light to the will, there is some higher illumination from above, which powerfully guides the rational mind, and makes it submit to a supernatural dictate and influence, which are consistent with the freedom of it.³⁸

Edwards therefore does not deny the possibility that the will can function independently without the assistance of the intellect in the process of decision making.

(4) The Affections

According to Edwards, the affections belong to the will and they immediately come from the will. He defines them as “smart and brisk commotions of the soul, produced according to the difference of objects presented to the senses or any ways convey’d to the mind.” Edwards claims that, as long as they are “pure” and follow “the dictates of religion,” the affections “appertain wholly to the rational will.” However, he teaches that if they flow only from “some passion of the body and emotion of the blood” or “anything of disturbance and disorder,” they are not the same with the will. Edwards,

³⁵ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 17.

³⁶ This is the general position of Reformed thinkers. For example, Turretin argues that “Nor ought this to seem unusual since the intellect and will are mutually connected by so strict a necessity that they can never be separated from each other. Nor does there seem to be a real and intrinsic distinction here, but only an extrinsic with regard to the objects (as one and the same faculty of the soul both judges by understanding and by willing embraces what it judges to be good; and it is called “intellect” when it is occupied in the knowledge and judgment of things, but “will” when it is carried to the love or hatred of the same).” Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison Jr. vol. I (New Jersey: P & R Publishing, 1992), X.I.II.

³⁷ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 17.

³⁸ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 17.

nevertheless, maintains that because there is “a close affinity” between the will and affections, they may be said to be the same.³⁹ Finally, he states that the understanding, will, and affections are “the acts of the same rational soul.”⁴⁰

II. Edwards’ Understanding of Free Choice

John Edwards deals with the doctrine of free choice in detail in Book II of *Veritas Redux*.⁴¹ In order to clarify the nature of free choice, he first discusses the erroneous understanding of the concept of free choice.⁴² Edwards especially criticizes the notion of free choice as indifference.

1. The Issue of Indifference

The concept of human freedom as indifference (*indifferentia*) was a highly controversial issue in the 17th century.⁴³ In particular, the first edition (1588) of Luis de Molina’s *Concordia or Harmony of Free Will with the Gifts of Grace*⁴⁴ played a central role in igniting this fierce debate.⁴⁵ The publication of *Concordia* and its aftermath

³⁹ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 17.

⁴⁰ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 17.

⁴¹ John Edwards, *Veritas Redux: Evangelical Truths Restored: Namely, Those concerning God’s Eternal Decrees, The Liberty of Man’s Will, Grace and Conversion, The Extent and Efficacy of Christ’s Redemption, and Perseverance in Grace* (London: 1707), 247-274.

⁴² Edwards states that “That I may do this effectually, I will proceed, First, negatively, and shew wherein this Freedom doth not consist; secondly, positively, and discover wherein it doth consist.” Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 247. The same pattern is found in Turretin’s discussion of the essential structure of free choice. See Turretin, *Institutes*, X. III. I-XV.

⁴³ Van Asselt, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 155.

⁴⁴ Luis De Molina, *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis*, (Lisbon, 1588). Part IV of the work was translated in English by Alfred J. Freddoso; Luis de Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge* (Ithaca/London: Cornell, 1988). Original full title of Molina’s work is *Liberi Arbitrii cum Gratiae Donis, Divina Praescientia, Providentia, Praedesstinatione et Reprobatione Concordia*, (first edition, Lisbon 1588; second edition, Antwerp 1595) and this writing was in large part extracted from the *Commentaria in primam divi Thomae partem* (Cuenca, 1592).

caused huge conflicts such as the debates between the Jesuits and the Dominicans and between Reformed and Jesuit theologians.⁴⁶

However, the controversy was not yet resolved in Edwards' days and there was an ongoing debate between the Reformed and the Arminians concerning the definition of free choice as indifference. In particular, the freedom as indifference was one of the hotly debated issues between Edwards and Whitby. Nevertheless, Edwards' debate with his adversaries should be understood in a little different perspective from previous ones.

Unlike his Reformed predecessors such as Turretin and Voetius who argued against freedom as indeterminacy from the more philosophical point of view, Edwards deals with the issue mainly from the theological perspective on the basis of Augustinian language of *posse non peccare, non posse non peccare, posse peccare et non peccare, and non posse peccare*. More specifically, within the soteriological boundary, Edwards focuses on the issue whether human beings can do spiritual good which truly pleases God even after the fall and, from the theological perspective, he refutes the Arminian insistence that human beings can perform spiritual good in whatever state they be

⁴⁵ Freddoso, "Preface" in Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge*, vii. However, the controversy is not confined to the issue of human freedom as indifference. The boundary of the whole debate is far broader than that. The debate involves predestination, providence, grace and human freedom. Most of all, in *Concordia*, Molina proposes the theory of divine Middle Knowledge as a solution to the tension between divine necessity and human freedom and it becomes the key issue in the debates. For the brief introduction to the debate on Middle Knowledge see Freddoso's introduction in *On Divine Foreknowledge*, 1-84; E. Vansteenberghe, "Molinisme," in *Dictionnaire de theologie catholique*, vol. 10-2, eds. A. Vacant, E. Mangenot, E. Amann, (Paris, 1930-1972), 2094-2187. Concerning the Reformed approach to the Middle Knowledge see Richard A. Muller, *Post Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Divine Essence and Attributes*, vol 3. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book, 2003), 417-43; idem, "Arminius and the Scholastic Tradition," in *Calvin Theological Journal*, 24/2 (1989), 263-77; idem, *God, Creation, and Providence in the thought of Jacob Arminius: sources and directions of scholastic Protestantism in the era of early orthodoxy* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1991), 154-66. Eef Dekker, *Rijker dan Midas: Vrijheid, genade en predestinatie in de theologie van Jacob Arminius (1559-1609)* (Zoetermeer: Boeckencentrum, 1993), 76-103; idem, "Was Arminius a Molinist?" in *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 27/2 (1996), 337-352. Cf. Edwards' understanding and his refutation of Jesuits' Middle Knowledge will be discussed in chapter 5.

⁴⁶ Van Asselt, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 155. Hubert Jedin evaluates the controversy as the "greatest doctrinal controversy ever in Catholic theology," Hubert Jedin, *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte* 4, 10 vols (Freiburg: Herder, 1999), 572.

because they possess freedom as indifference.⁴⁷ Therefore, since he does not discuss them in his writings, it is not clear how Edwards understood delicate philosophical questions such as whether the will is still indifferent after all things requisite for acting being posited.⁴⁸

It is also unclear why Edwards does not deal with the issue of indifference from the philosophical perspective. It might be related with his immediate context. Edwards' main opponent, Daniel Whitby, defines the human freedom in terms of indifference and criticizes Reformed understanding of free choice. According to Whitby, "the will of man by nature is indifferent, and can incline to good or evil as it pleases: this was in Adam, and this is in all men since."⁴⁹ However, Whitby does not raise the technical philosophical questions in his discourse on that matter. In his refutation of the Reformed, Whitby's focus remains on two issues: (1) whether man can choose good and avoid evil after the fall and (2) whether man possesses the freedom from necessity as well as from coercion,⁵⁰ and Whitby tries to resolve the issues mainly by the theological arguments. Therefore, Edwards might think that he did not need to discuss the philosophical issues

⁴⁷ As for other Reformed, the boundary of discussion of the issue is far broader. For example, their discussion is commonly extended to other doctrines such as divine knowledge and divine concurrence. Relatively, Edwards' discussion is of limited boundary.

⁴⁸ Cf. Concerning the issue of the debate, Turretin states that "But the question is about indifference in the second act and in a compositive sense, i. e. with respect to the potency of simultaneity (*potential simultatis*), which is called active and subjective indifference. [so the question indeed is] whether the will, all requisites for acting being posited; for example, the decree of God and his concurrence; the judgment of the practical intellect, etc. is always so indifferent and undetermined that it can act or not act." Turretin, *Institutes*, X.III.IV.

⁴⁹ Daniel Whitby, *A Discourse Concerning I. The True Import of the Words Election and Reprobation, And the Things Signified by Them in the Holy Scripture. II. The Extent of Christ's Redemption. ... V. The Perseverance or Defectibility of the Saints; with Some Reflections on the State of Heathens, the Providence and Prescience of God* (London: 1735), 305. Whitby also describes human freedom as "a power over our own will, to chuse or not to chuse, and stands opposed to necessity." *Ibid.*, 329.

⁵⁰ Whitby states that "That the liberty belonging to this question, is only that of a lapsed man in a state of trial, probation, and temptation; whether he hath a freedom to chuse life or death, to answer or reject the calls and invitations of God to do, by the assistance of the grace afforded in the gospel to him, what is spiritually good as well as evil; or whether he be determined to one, having only a freedom from coercion, but not from necessity." Whitby, *A Discourse*, 299.

because his opponent does not deal with them and his Reformed ancestors already addressed them in enough detail.⁵¹

Another possibility might result from the intellectual background of Edwards' time. During the second period of high orthodoxy, scholastic languages and terms were gradually disappearing in scholarly discourses.⁵² Thus, this intellectual transition influenced the formation of Edwards' theology and consequently may have caused him to lose some scholastic languages, terms, and distinctions which involved previous Reformed discussion of freedom as indifference.

A similar approach to Edwards' is found in the writing of 18th century particular Baptist John Gill. In *The Cause of God and Truth* which was written by Gill himself to refute Daniel Whitby, like Edwards, Gill does not deal with delicate philosophical issues in detail. For example, as with Edwards, he does not use scholastic distinctions, which was critical for other previous Reformed scholastics to resolve the issue, such as "*In actu primo & in actu secundo, in sensu diviso & in sensu composito, and simultatem potentiae & potentiam simultatis*."⁵³ Gill provides neither any definition of indifference nor the

⁵¹ Therefore, in his discussion against Whitby, even though he does not explicitly mention them, Edwards may have in mind scholastic distinctions such as the difference between the structural moment of the mere potency of the faculty and that of the concrete acts of the faculty.

⁵² Richard A. Muller, *Post Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* vol. I (Grand Rapids: Baker Book, 2003), 31-32; 73-81.

⁵³ As an example of Reformed use of Scholastic distinctions on the issue, see Turretin's discussion: According to Turretin, on the bases of these distinctions, Turretin distinguishes two different types of indifference: (1) "In first act or in the divided sense, as a simultaneity of potencies, which is called passive and objective," and (2) "In second act or in the compounded sense, as a potency of simultaneities, which is called active and subjective." However, he agrees with the former while he rejects the latter. Turretin points to the difference between the structural moment of the mere potency of the faculty and that of the concrete acts of the faculty. He accepts the indifference to opposites at the former level while he denies it at the latter level. For Turretin, it is impossible for the will to be indifferent after having posited the requisites for acting. In other words, in the state of actualization, the will cannot have indifference in the sense of *potentiam simultatis* at the same moment in time. Thus, he strongly opposes Molina who insists that the will is indifferent at every moment with respect to any act provided that the requisites for acting are present. In a formal definition, therefore, the true nature of free will does not lie in indifference but in "rational willingness." Turretin, *Institutes*, X.III.I-XV.

detailed explanation of the concept of indifference in his discussion of the nature of free choice.

Instead, in similar vein to Edwards, Gill tries to refute Whitby through the explanation of the freedom of God, the good angels, the devil, and human beings.⁵⁴ For instance, Gill claims that, even though human beings are “determined” to either good or evil in whatever state it would be, they still own freedom because they act freely and voluntarily without any force or coercion. On that basis, Gill simply argues that “The liberty of the will does not consist in an indifference to good and evil, or in an indetermination to either; otherwise the will of no being would be free...”⁵⁵

Considering that Gill’s pattern in his criticism of Whitby’s notion of freedom is quite similar to that of Edwards, we can see that Edwards’ approach to the issue is not unique to himself. Nevertheless, since he does not explicitly discuss them in his writings, it is still unclear how Edwards understands the issues of indeterminacy of the will from the philosophical view and how he evaluates the Reformed predecessors’ previous approach to the issue. At any rate, the nature of human freedom as indifference was one of the critical issues between Edwards and his opponents and Edwards strongly criticizes the doctrine of the indifference of the will in his writings. He claims that Whitby’s

⁵⁴ John Gill, *The Cause of God and Truth* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 8-9.

⁵⁵ Gill, *The Cause of God*, 8. Gill also affirms this assertion in his discussion of the nature of free choice according to fourfold stage of human beings. He states: “The will of man, in a state of innocence, was indeed mutable, and capable of being wrought upon and inclined to evil, as the event shows; yet during that state, was entirely bent on that which is good, and acted freely, and without any co-action, in obedience to the commands of God. The will of man, in his fallen state, is wholly addicted to sinful lusts, and in the fulfilling of them takes the utmost delight and pleasure. Man, in his regenerate state, though he is inclined both to good and evil which arises from the two different principles of corruption and grace in him; yet both move freely, though determined to their several objects. The flesh, or corrupt part, is solely determined to that which is evil; grace, or the new creature, to that which is spiritually good; so that with the flesh, the regenerate man serves the law of sin, and with his mind the law of God. The will of the glorified saints in heaven is wholly given up to spiritual and divine things, nor can it be moved to that which is sinful; and yet as they serve the Lord constantly, so with all freedom and liberty. Consider, therefore, the will in very rank of beings, its liberty does not consist in an indifference or indetermination to good and evil.” Ibid.

assertion is the same with that of the Council of Trent and all Arminians. Edwards points out the danger of this idea particularly with regard to the doctrine of grace:

No occasion for preventing, or exciting, or concomitant grace... if a man hath it from the innate power of his will to assent or dissent, to embrace or not to embrace, in matters of a divine and religious nature. If it be thus with him, the divine aid is unnecessary, the grace of Christ is superfluous.⁵⁶

For Edwards, therefore, this is the most dangerous doctrine for Christianity:

And then, by this doctrine, the whole fabrick of Christianity is shock'd and endanger'd. For if we have a natural power still remaining in us to do all good, to what purpose were the undertaking of Christ, and his sending his Holy Spirit? We must conclude then, that the Arminian notion of this indifferency of the will is a most pernicious doctrine, and subverts the very fundamentals of our religion.⁵⁷

Indeed, these statements show that whether human beings still possess a natural power to do spiritual good in the state of sin was the main concern for Edwards and his discourse on the indifference of the will occur within the context of soteriology.⁵⁸

His detailed refutation of freedom as indifference appears in Book II of *Veritas Redux*. As with other preceding or contemporary Reformed thinkers, Edwards strongly disapproves of the concept of free choice as absolute indifference.

Edwards writes that, according to the Remonstrants, free choice is “a power to choose the one or the other, as the persons who are supposed to masters of this indifferency, shall please.”⁵⁹ He also states that, for them, free choice exists “when a man having divers, yea, contrary objects propounded to him, rejects one and takes the other, but had it in his power to reject that which he took, and to take that which he rejected.”⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Edwards, *The Arminian Doctrines Condemn'd by the Holy Scriptures, By Many of Ancient Fathers, By the Church of England, And even by the Suffrage of Right Reason* (London: 1711), 42.

⁵⁷ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 42.

⁵⁸ Edwards clearly states that “... I am speaking of free-will, as it hath relation to spiritual and divine matters, the things which appertain to salvation.” Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 252.

⁵⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 247.

In a word, for Edwards' adversaries, the will is able to choose whatever it likes in whatever situation human beings may be.⁶¹

Before we continue to examine his discourse, we here need to clarify the nuance of Edwards' definition of freedom as indifference. When we understand it merely apart from the context, it sounds very similar to the concept of freedom of contrary choice in general.⁶² Then, it may be logically assumed that Edwards denies it. However, his refutation of Reformed adversaries' concept of free choice does not deny the general freedom of contrary choice. As noted earlier, Edwards' discussion now occurs within the soteriological boundary. What Edwards is refuting is the idea that, since the will is always indifferent, human beings possess the ability freely to choose the good and freely to avoid that which is evil in whatever state they be.

Edwards refutes this idea of the freedom of indeterminacy on several arguments. First, for him, the nature of God's free choice shows that the essence of free choice does not consist in indifference:

... for God himself, who is the freest agent of all, is not free to choose evil as well as good, but the unchangeable purity and holiness of his nature do always determine his will, so that it can never be diverted from making choice of that which is good, and it can never be biased and enclined to that which is evil.⁶³

Edwards mentions the blessed angels and the saints in heaven, as well. He states that the good angels act freely, and yet choose as well as do nothing but what is good. Edwards

⁶⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 247. Cf. Turretin's definition of Reformed adversaries' concept of free choice is "the faculty by which all requisites for acting being posited, the will can act or not act." Turretin, *Institutes*, X.III.II.

⁶¹ Edwards particularly brings in Bellarmine and Episcopius as the examples. Edwards criticizes that they even claims that Christ might have sinned because Christ's free choice also consisted in indifference. Edwards criticizes that their opinion is utterly unbiblical. Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 247-48.

⁶² Here, freedom of contrary choice indicates the scholastic distinction which refers to the freedom of contrariety (*libertas contrarietatis*). It signifies the freedom to choose A or B. Protestant scholastics also uses the term, the freedom of contradiction (*libertas contradictionis*) which indicates the freedom to act A or not A. Van Asselt, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 45.

⁶³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 248-49.

also teaches that the saints in heaven are free and yet are determined to do good only and they have no power to do otherwise. Likewise, he maintains that evil angels are confined to choose evil only and so they have no power to do otherwise.⁶⁴ For Edwards, therefore, these cases testify that “liberty of will may be conversant about one kind of things.”⁶⁵ In sum, the will of God, the glorified angels, Saints, and devils is inclined to do only one sort of thing. The will of the former is determined to do good only, and the will of the last to evil only.⁶⁶ For Edwards, thus, Arminians’ notion that freedom of human choice consists in indifference cannot be warranted.⁶⁷

Second, according to Edwards, the fact that the will wills happiness and is loath to unhappiness and misery shows that the liberty of the will does not consist in indifference or equilibrium.⁶⁸ He states that “His will hath not the power freely to encline itself to hate,

⁶⁴ Edwards writes that “whose wills are so enclin’d to evil, that they can’t bend them to any thing else, and yet they are not forc’d or necessitated, but they act freely what they do.” Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 249.

⁶⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 249. Turretin also uses the similar arguments against his adversaries. He states that “such an indifference to opposite [acts] is found in no free agent, whether created or uncreated: neither in God, who is most freely good indeed, yet not indifferently, as if he could be evil, but necessarily and immutably; nor in Christ, who obeyed God most freely and yet most necessarily because he could not sin; nor in angels and the blessed, who worship God with the highest willingness and yet are necessarily determined to good; nor in devils and reprobates, who cannot but sin, although they sin freely. So neither the constancy and immutability of the former in the good destroys, but perfects their freedom; nor the inextricable obstinacy and firmness of the latter in evil prevents them from sinning most heinously and so deserving the heaviest punishment.” Turretin, *Institutes*, X.III.V.

⁶⁶ Concerning the necessity and freedom in God, angels, and the saints in heaven, Edwards also states that “If he saith we can’t do otherwise, and therefore the action is not free, he talks idly, for then neither God himself, nor the good angels, nor the glorify’d saints act freely; for non of them can act otherwise than they do; that is, they can’t do any evil. They are under a happy necessity of doing good, and yet they do it most freely. So, ’tis with the regenerate here on earth, who, as they are such can do no evil; but though their will is determin’d by the divine influx, yet it is free.” Edwards, *The Arminian Doctrines*, 48.

⁶⁷ Edwards writes that “it is a false notion that the liberty of will consists in indifferency.... we can’t deny but it may be so with men, and we can’t deny but there may be free will in us where there is no indifferency of acting.” Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 249.

⁶⁸ Edwards maintains that “No man wills and desires misery, as such and he can’t possibly bring his mind to it.” Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 249. Turretin also presents a similar argument that “we cannot abstain from seeking the highest good because no one can bring himself to wish to be miserable. Nor can it be said that free choice is not occupied about the highest good or ultimate end, but only about the election of means. For in the appetite of the (true or false) highest good, the reason of virtue or of vice is principally situated.” Turretin, *Institutes*, X.III.VIII.

as well as to love, that which he knows will make him happy. His choice is necessarily determin'd to one side, he is not at liberty to desire the other.”⁶⁹ Thus, Edwards argues that there is freedom of will without indifference to contrary objects.

Third, Edwards testifies this by instances both in the elect and in the reprobate. He asserts that the former does not possess the indifference in their wills “for they are fix’d to that which is good only.” To elaborate this, Edwards distinguishes the double state of the elect: the elect before conversion and regeneration and after them. In the former case, man does not have any freedom to choose good. Instead, they possess the will only to perform evil because “the liberty of the will to good was taken away from all men by Adam’s fall, and consequently from them.” However after regeneration, the freedom to do good “is restor’d to them by Christ, through the operation of the Holy Spirit.” To support this view, Edwards enumerates John 8:36, Romans 6:18, Romans 8:2, and 2 Corinthians 3:17. For him, only the regenerate can do good which is pleasing to God.⁷⁰

Edwards, nonetheless, teaches that the regenerate possesses a will to do not only good but also evil because there is “no perfection in this life, no, not in the most regenerate persons—conflict between the flesh and the spirit.”⁷¹ He claims that strong inclination to evil still exists in respect to the flesh although this inclination is “not seated in their wills but in their sensual and carnal part.”⁷² Nevertheless, Edwards maintains that “God so enlightens and renews their rational and superior faculties that they constantly move towards that which is good, and choose it as their portion; and they hate all that is evil, tho’ they are not always free from the pollution of it.” Therefore, he states as follows:

⁶⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 249.

⁷⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 250.

⁷¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 250-51.

⁷² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 251.

Tho' the regenerate act freely, yet that freedom is not an indifferency to both good and evil, it is not an equal enclining to either, but it is a being confin'd to the former, and to that alone. This confinement does not deprive them of true liberty of their wills, and their freedom of acting.⁷³

In this regard, Edwards argues that the will of the regenerate is confined to the good and yet it does not remove freedom of their will.⁷⁴

Fourth, Edwards relies on the judgment of Seneca. He quotes a passage from Seneca's *Beneficiis* to support his argument.⁷⁵ According to him, Seneca's statement shows that the suggestions of natural reason and good sense also deny the indifference of human will to both good and evil.⁷⁶ Edwards emphasizes that, even though he was a wise man among the heathens, Seneca knew the truth. Thus, he states that "Much more we, being directed and assisted by a supernatural light, which the Holy Scriptures afford us, cannot but maintain this truth."⁷⁷

Fifth, Edwards insists that the doctrine of the decrees deny the freedom of indifference.⁷⁸ According to him, "the resolution" of the doctrine of free choice depends upon the decree because "if God determin'd all things, then man can't will and act both extremes." The nature of the decrees shows that the freedom of indifference of the will cannot exist because "God hath decreed to give effectual grace to the one, which enclines them only to good; and he hath decreed to deny this grace to the other, without which

⁷³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 251.

⁷⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 251.

⁷⁵ "Non ideo minus vult quia not potest nolle: imo magnus argumentum est firmæ voluntatis ne mutare quidem posse. Vir bonus non potest non facere quod facit." Quoted from Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 251.

⁷⁶ Edwards thus criticizes John Tillotson (1630-94) who states that "where there is no possibility of sinning, there can be no trial of our virtue and obedience." Quoted from Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 252.

⁷⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 251.

⁷⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 252.

nothing can be done but evil.”⁷⁹ Edwards adds that “There is not such a freedom of will in men whereby they may either close with the grace of God, or refuse it.” He argues that this was possible only at the primitive state of innocence in Paradise which is not available to us any more.⁸⁰

In addition, in *The Arminian Doctrine Condemn'd*, Edwards particularly relies on the Church Fathers to support his criticism of the indeterminacy of the will. He quotes Prosper of Aquitaine, Gregory Nyssa, and Chrysostom and shows that they are on his side.⁸¹ For example, to negate the idea of the indifference of the sinner’s will between good and evil, Edwards quotes Prosper’s statement that “*Voluntas nihil in suis habet viribus nisi periculi facilitatem.*”⁸²

On the basis upon these arguments, finally, Edwards concludes as follows:

... all acts of the will are not free in the Remonstrants sense of liberty; that is, a power to choose either good or evil. They will be convinc’d that freedom of will, and a power of making choice of both those contraries are not convertible, but that the will may be determin’d to one kind of actions, and yet be free.”⁸³

Indeed, for Edwards, human freedom has nothing to do with freedom of indifference.

Both the elect and the reprobate do not possess a freedom of indifference in their wills.

They act according to their nature. Thus, the former is inclined to do the good only whereas the latter only to the evil.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 254-55. He states that “there can’t be this sort of free-will in the regenerate because God hath from eternity determin’d to give them effectual grace, by virtue of which they are kept from all voluntary and deliberate commission of sin, and taking delight in it.” Ibid., 252.

⁸⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 255. Edwards’ understanding of human freedom before the fall will be discussed in detail in the section of fourfold state of human beings.

⁸¹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 42-43.

⁸² Prosper of Aquitaine, *De vocatione omnium gentium*, book I chapter 6, quoted from Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 42. Edwards translated this as “The will hath nothing in its own power, but a readiness to endanger itself.” Ibid.

⁸³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 256.

⁸⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 252.

However, Edwards states that his current discussion of freedom as indifference does not apply to all human actions. Instead, this is confined to spiritual and religious matters. In other words, Edwards' discussion of free choice as indifference is now bound by soteriological concerns. He does not deny the general freedom of choice or the natural freedom from coercion. Rather, in his discourse, Edwards highlights the elements of necessity in spiritual matters. To elaborate, for sinners, Edwards speaks of the necessity of sinning and of the bondage of the will in sin. Sinners choose only evil because original sin and corruption destroyed the ability freely to choose the good and freely to avoid that which is evil.⁸⁵ Thus, the unregenerate cannot be indifferent in spiritual realms any more. Likewise, since the regenerate were enlightened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, they are inclined only to good. Therefore, they cannot have equilibrium of the will in spiritual matters. This is obviously identified from the following quotation:

I hope none are so perverse as to mistake me; I am speaking of free-will, as it hath relation to spiritual and divine matters, the things which appertain to salvation. For in respect of other objects, it is not to be doubted, that the will of man is free with a freedom of indifferency, and this freedom bares date from Adam. As to these things he hath a faculty to will and choose as he pleases, and most of the calamities and errors of our lives are to be imputed to his liberty of acting. Wherefore I speak not of the will as to common acts, but with respect to religion and salvation, with regard to spiritual and supernatural good, with relation to saving faith and repentance, and all good works.”⁸⁶

This statement clearly shows that Edwards' current discussion of indifference should be understood within the soteriological boundary. That is, his focus is now on the issue whether human beings can choose good that pleases God even before they are regenerated.

However, his statement that mankind does have freedom of indifference with regard to earthly matters is in need of some qualification, inasmuch as other Reformed thinkers have asserted that there can be no indifference of the will even in respect to the

⁸⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 252.

⁸⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 252.

earthly matters.⁸⁷ Thus, it seems that Edwards' argument does not quite fit to the traditional Reformed position on the issue, and has been somewhat adapted to the debated of his time.⁸⁸

Nevertheless, we should not easily conclude that Edwards departed from the traditional Reformed position on this matter because Edwards basically agrees with traditional Reformed teaching on the Arminian concept of equilibrium of the will in the soteriological realm. Probably, Edwards here simply tried to say that human beings possess freedom of choice with respect to the earthly matters, though they lost it in regards to spiritual matters. Edwards himself may lack clarity on the issue because of the gradual loss of scholastic language and distinctions in his times. However, unfortunately, since he does not discuss the indifference of the will regarding earthly matters in detail, it is hard to make a judgment on his statement. Nevertheless, one thing is quite certain from Edwards' discourses; human freedom with respect to the spiritual matters cannot be understood in terms of indeterminacy or equilibrium as Arminians have proposed.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ This is the general position of the Reformed thinkers. For example, see Turretin, *Institutes*, X.III.IV. Turretin argues that indifference of the will can exist only at the structural moment of the concrete acts of the faculty. According to the Reformed ancestors, the indifference to the opposite acts exists only at the structural moment of the mere potency of the will. Ibid.

⁸⁸ As already noted in chapter 2, the Reformed orthodox thinkers have traditionally disputed the doctrine of indifference as the foundation of freedom in Jesuit or Arminian theology. However, the limited sense of indifference as part of the most basic structure of the faculty of free choice is not denied at all by the Reformed scholastics. For example, Turretin argues that this indifference "must be understood in the first act, as to simultaneity of power, because the power or faculty of Adam was so disposed through the mutable condition in which he had been created that it could be determined to evil no less than to good (but successively and in the divided sense, not at the same time and in the compound sense) which sad experience taught too well." Turretin, *Institutes*, VIII.I.VIII.

⁸⁹ Even if there are some elements of departure from traditional Reformed understanding of the issue in Edwards' teachings, one should not forget that the Reformed orthodoxy is not a monolithic tradition. Edwards might be slightly different from other Reformed thinkers such as Turretin. However, that would not make him less orthodox than others. There was a variety of opinions on the Reformed doctrines in the 16th and 17th century. Its limit must be determined by confession. Definitely, including the doctrine of free choice, Edwards' theology did not step out of the confessional boundary of Reformed tradition. Concerning the boundary of Reformed tradition, see Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book, 2003), 1-84.

Finally, in order to prove that the sinners do not have freedom of indifference, Edwards also deals with his adversaries' objections against the Reformed. According to his opponents, some biblical passages affirm the indifference of the will because they ask all persons to choose good or evil. Edwards particularly picks up Deuteronomy 30: 15 & 19 as an example to refute his adversaries. They seem to talk about the indifference of the will. However, Edwards insists that these verses refer not to spiritual but to temporal rewards or punishments, which Moses had already mentioned in the 28th chapter. He claims that, even if we suppose that these verses deal with spiritual rewards or punishment of higher nature, they do not indicate the indifference of the will because Moses speaks to all the Israelites "as if they were alike, as is the usual way of all prophets and public teachers." Therefore, Edwards argues that one must interpret these verses "in a separate and divided sense..."⁹⁰ In other words, Moses encourages the regenerate and those who will be converted to obey the law of God and the way of happiness. However, he leaves the reprobate and unregenerate to do as they are pleased with.⁹¹

Along with exegetical issue, Edwards deals with his adversaries' argument that, if the unregenerate have no free choice to spiritual good, it is absurd to ask them to choose good and condemn them for their disobedience. He refutes this objection by three reasons. First, Edwards insists that even the reprobate "once had a will, as they were in Adam." Thus, it is just to command them to obey his commandments and do good. Second, he asserts that they are not forced to disobey. Rather the reprobate freely and willingly disobeys God. For that reason, they deserve condemnation from God and God still can justly command them to follow God's commandments. Third, Edwards argues that the reprobate can "will the outward acts of religion, and many things appertaining to it, and therefore, they are justly blamed and condemn'd for their defect as to this."⁹²

⁹⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 257.

⁹¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 257-58.

⁹² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 258.

2. The Definition of Free Choice

After discussing what free choice in man is not, Edwards gives his definition of free choice. The definition runs as follows:

We have heard what free-will in man is not, that is, it consists not in indifferency, it is not a power to act or not act. Now let us see what it is; and certainly there cannot be a truer and plainer definition of it than this, that it is a power to act willingly, and not with compulsion. Violence and force are opposite to liberty, and therefore the liberty of the will signifies a voluntary acting, and not from any violent and coactive principle. It is a rational spontaneity, a free and deliberate acting without any force upon us. The free-will of all intelligent agents is of this nature, though it be in one kind only, and they can't act otherwise.⁹³

Edwards continues to explain in detail the nature of free choice:

It is sufficient to constitute the freedom of their wills, that their actions are free and voluntary, and that they lie not under any constraint and compulsion. And this is that liberty of will which is to be found in man, and whence he is denominated a free agent. What he doth, he can do voluntarily, and without coercion, and that not only in natural, secular, and temporal matters, but in those that are supernatural, spiritual, and divine, and which have relation to his everlasting condition. That is the freedom of will which the famous Lombard, and other Great schoolmen, have asserted, and asserted, and which was maintain'd long before by St. Augustine, in his Book concerning free-will.⁹⁴

In order to understand Edwards' concept of free choice, we should note particularly two things from his definition. First, Edwards focuses on willing itself rather than on the function of choice. More specifically, in his definition, free choice is not explicitly discussed by Edwards as the possibility to choose opposite things, but as the unhindered movement of the will consenting to the performance of an action.

Here, it will be helpful for the understanding of Edwards' concept of free choice to examine the ideas of other several Reformed divines such as Vermigli, Junius, Boston, and Ridgley. Peter Martyr Vermigli defines free choice as "a faculty or power, whereby

⁹³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 258.

⁹⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 259.

we either take or reject, as it seemeth good unto us, thinges judged by reason.”⁹⁵ For Franciscus Junius, free choice is “the faculty of the discrete will (*voluntas discreta*), free from necessity, by which a mind-gifted nature chooses one thing above another from the things which are shown by the intellect, or choice facing one and the same thing, accepts it as being good or rejects it as being bad.”⁹⁶ *Synopsis purioris theologiae* describes free choice as “the disposition and property of choice” and “free power of willing and not willing, or that of choosing and refusing; free faculty without coercion, in its own individual motion.”⁹⁷ Turretin explains free choice as “the faculty of the rational soul by which it spontaneously does what it pleases, a judgment of the reason going before.”⁹⁸ Thomas Boston states that “Freedom of the will is a liberty in the will, whereby of its own accord, freely and spontaneously, without any force upon it, it chooses or refuses what is proposed to it by the understanding. And this freedom of will, man hath in whatever state he be.”⁹⁹ As for Thomas Ridgley, free choice “consisted in a power, which man had, of choosing or embracing what appeared, agreeably to the dictates of his

⁹⁵ Vermigli, *Commentary on Romans* (London: Iohn Daye, 1568), 177; “Illud autem ita definio: Est facultas, qua vel suscipimus, vel repudiamus, prout libverit, ea que a ratione decreta fuerint.” Vermigli, *Loci Communes*, 153.

⁹⁶ Quoted from Van Asselt, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 100-101. Originally from disputation of xxii in Franciscus Junius, *Theses theologiae, quae in inclita academia Lugduno-batava ad exercitia publicarum disputationum, praeside D. Francisco Junio variis temporibus a Theologiae Candidatis adversus oppugnantes propugnatae sunt*. (Leiden, 1592).

⁹⁷ “Dum porro Liberum arbitrium dicitur, ibi libertas adjectum et affectio proprietatesque est arbitrii, quod proprie juris et potestatis vocabulum est, under sane non proprie denotat mentis iudicium et libertatis voluntatem, ut volunt Scholastici, ita ut duae potentiae simul denotentur, neque potestatem liberam quidvis vel bonum vel malum faciendi, sed potius volendi et nolendi, seu eligendi et repudiandi; liberam, sine coactione, suo ac proprio motu facultatem.” *Synopsis purioris theologiae, disputationibus quinquaginta duabus comprehensa ac conscripta per Johnnem polyandrum, Andream Rivetum, Antonium Walaeum, Antonium Thysium* (Leiden, 1625. Edition sexta, curavit et praefatus est Dr. H. Bavinck. Leiden: Donner, 1881), 145.

⁹⁸ Turretin, *Institutes*, X.I.II. “sed a Scholis Christianis recepta est, tanquam commodior ad designandam facultatem illam animae rationalis, qua quodcunque libet sponte agit praeunte rationis iudicio.” Francisco Turretino, *Institutio Theologiae Elencticae* vol I. (Geneva, 1679-85; a new edition, Edinburgh: 1847), X.I.II (598).

⁹⁹ Thomas Boston, *An Illustration of the Doctrines of the Christian Religion, comprehending A Complete Body of Divinity*, vol. I (Aberdeen: G. and R. King, 1848-52), 176.

understanding, to be good, or of refusing and avoiding what was evil,-and this without any constraint or force laid upon him, to act contrary to these dictates.”¹⁰⁰

According to these Reformed thinkers, free choice is explicitly explained as not only the spontaneous and free movement of the will but also the possibility to choose contrary things. This is the nature of free choice which was commonly accepted by Reformed thinkers.¹⁰¹ Why then does Edwards not clearly state the soul’s function of choice in his definition of free choice? It might be related to a translation issue. As mentioned previously, *liberum arbitrium* was loosely and incorrectly translated as free will or the freedom of the will in English. Thus, Edwards as an English divine might pay more attention to the essential freedom of the will or the root of free choice as rational spontaneity rather than to the function of choice in his explanation of free choice. This might be also ascribed to the intellectual background of Edwards’ time. As noted earlier, Edwards lived in the second period of high orthodoxy which went through the gradual loss of scholastic languages and terms in theology. Thus, this intellectual change could influence the formation of Edwards’ definition of free choice and consequently might have caused some unclarity in it.

However, even though he does not explicitly mention it in his definition of free choice, Edwards does not ignore the function of choice of the will in the concept of human free choice. Some passages which deal with matters such as the function of the

¹⁰⁰ Thomas Ridgeley, *Commentary on the Larger Catechism: Previously titled A Body of Divinity: Wherein the Doctrines of the Christian Religion are explained and defended, Being the Substance of Several Lectures on the Assembly’s Larger Catechism* (Philadelphia, 1814-15, reprint, Edmonton: Still Waters Revival Books, 1993), 390-391.

¹⁰¹ The Reformed scholastics commonly define the essential nature of freedom in terms of rational willingness, by which a free person does what he pleases according to a rational judgment. For example, Turretin states that “Since, therefore, the formal reason of liberty is not placed in indifference, it cannot be sought elsewhere than in rational willingness, by which man does what he pleases by a previous judgment of reason. Thus two things must here be joined together to its constitution: (1) the choice (*to proairetikon*) so that what is done is not done by a blind impulse and a certain brute instinct, but from choice (*ek proaireseos*) and the previous light of reason and the judgment of the practical intellect; (2) the voluntariness (*to hekousion*) so that what is done may be done spontaneously and freely and without compulsion.” Turretin, *Institutes*, X.III.X.

will and the constitution of human action clearly suggest the concept of choice in human freedom. First of all, in his explanation of free choice in regenerate human persons, Edwards states that their freedom “consists in the rational exerting the operations of their minds towards that which is holy, without necessity and compulsion. They act with deliberation and judgment, with a free persuasion of mind, and a plenary exercise of their elective faculty.” In sum, he teaches that “they are voluntary actors, and (1) do what they do from choice.”¹⁰² Here, Edwards clearly suggests the aspect of choice in human free choice.

Moreover, Edwards argues that human beings are different classis of beings from animals because they are “endued with rational natures, and consequently were made not only with reason and understanding, but with will and choice.”¹⁰³ According to him, human beings as rational creatures possess free choice and “volition, election, consultation” are three indispensable elements of all human actions. Thus, for Edwards, the actions of menkind cannot possibly be separated with choice and freedom.¹⁰⁴ Finally, concerning the absolute requisites of all human actions, he states as follows:

We see then how requisite it is that there should be such a faculty of the soul as free-will in man; that there should be liberty, and choice, and deliberation in what he doth, that his actions should be with willingness, and not with compulsion, for herein consists the natural freedom of man’s will.¹⁰⁵

Thus, from those statements, we may logically infer that, for Edwards, the concept of choice is joined to the constitution of free choice.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 260.

¹⁰³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 260-61.

¹⁰⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 261.

¹⁰⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 262-63.

¹⁰⁶ Even though he does not explicitly address the freedom of contrariety or contradiction in his discussion of human freedom, it does not necessarily mean that Edwards denies them in human beings. It is hard to tell how he understands the freedom of contrariety or contradiction exactly because he does not state it clearly. However, from above Edwards’ statements concerning the nature of choice in human freedom, we may also logically infer that, for Edwards, man possesses the freedom of contrariety or

In addition, the function of choice in the idea of human free choice is also implied in his discussion of the nature of good or evil works. He argues that there is no goodness or sinfulness at all in the actions of men unless the actions proceed from “volition and choice, freedom and deliberation.” Edwards claims that the beasts are not blamable or punishable because they are wholly lack of “a rational freedom and power of choosing.”¹⁰⁷ Thus, he states as follows:

As vice must be with the will, or else 'tis no vice, so it is also with virtue; there must be liberty to choose, otherwise it is no virtuous action; for virtue is not a thing forced, and against the will, but it is free and voluntary. This is necessarily required to make a work good, this is an indispensable ingredient of all virtuous and religious actions. Yea (as I said before concerning the want of knowledge) without this principle they have nothing of morality in them, and consequently have no goodness in them. For ... the essence of good is rational choice. Where religion and goodness take place in mens hearts, there the backwardness, averseness and obstinacy of the will are removed, they become a willing people, they serve God with a frank mind, and a most ready propension. This I say is necessary to give their actions the denomination of good works.¹⁰⁸

Indeed, we see here that the function of choice constitutes the free choice of mankind as an indispensable principle. Consequently, from Edwards' several statements, we may logically infer that, for Edwards, the concept of choice or, more specifically, freedom of contrariety and contradiction is joined to the constitution of free choice.

Next, in his definition of free choice, the phrase “though it be in one kind only, and they can't act otherwise” does not indicate that Edwards denies the natural freedom to choose. It simply means that the intelligent agents cannot act against their nature.¹⁰⁹

contradiction in whatever state he be, though it occurs within the boundary of man's nature. Nevertheless, his view of the freedom of contrariety or contradiction cannot be clearly resolved because Edwards did not discuss it in detail.

¹⁰⁷ John Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* III, (London, 1726), 53

¹⁰⁸ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* III, 53-54.

¹⁰⁹ This is clear in his next statement: “Thus God's will is free, thus that of the blessed spirits in heaven, whether angels or saints, and of the apostate angels and damned souls is free, though the three formentioned can will only that which is good, and the two last that only which is evil.” Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 258-59.

For example, according to Edwards, the nature of the sinners is sinful and evil. However, he argues that this sinfulness does not compel the sinner to sin. That is, for Edwards, the sinful nature of the unregenerate does not destroy the natural freedom of the will or general ability to choose by the will. Nevertheless, he teaches that the choice of the unregenerate is made within their sinful nature. Therefore, Edwards does not deny a general freedom to choose but only a freedom and an ability to cease being sinful or to abstain from acting sinfully.¹¹⁰ In sum, for Edwards, freedom does not mean the ability to do anything but to act freely according to one's nature. Consequently, in spite of their natural freedom to choose, the sinners cannot but sin before God and cannot do otherwise in that sense.

Therefore, according to Edwards, in spiritual matters, sinners do not have free choice in the sense that they cannot freely choose spiritual good that God is pleased with. For him, even though they freely act without compulsion, sinners only choose evil because "their choice is the result of the inward disposition of the individual resulting from the corruption of his nature."¹¹¹ They cannot act otherwise in the sense that they cannot do good. Thus, for Edwards, sinners have the freedom of choice in a very limited or minimalist sense.¹¹²

At any rate, according to Edwards, free choice is defined as rational spontaneity without compulsion. Thus he once again states that "all persons have a power of acting freely, that is, without force; the good act freely when they do good, and the wicked act

¹¹⁰ What is denied consistently in Edwards' discourse of free choice is not a general ability to choose but the ability of the free choice of sinless acts. According to him, the fallen will has become sinful but it remains free.

¹¹¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 252.

¹¹² Cf. Turretin states that "This also proves that free choice absolutely considered and in the genus of being can never be taken away from man in whatever state he may be. If this is denied by some to man in a state of sin, it ought to be understood not so much physically and absolutely as morally and relatively: not so much with regard to the essence of free choice as with regard to its powers, as will be shown afterwards." Turretin, *Institutes*, X.III.XI.

freely when they do evil.”¹¹³ To elaborate, without any coercion, the regenerate voluntarily performs the good and holy according to the exercise of the rational deliberation and elective judgment of their minds. Thus, Edwards calls it “happy freedom.”¹¹⁴ Likewise, the wicked always act freely and willingly. Their willingness to sin is obvious from “pleasure they take in it, from the cheerfulness they express, from the greediness and impetuosity which they discover in their actions, and from their long continuance in the ways of vice.” In this regard, Edwards also calls the wicked “free agents” because they sin willingly. However, since their decision only result in evil deeds, Edwards denominates it as “unhappy liberty.”¹¹⁵ In a word, Edwards states that “both good and bad men act, though in a different kind, freely, and voluntarily, and unconstrainedly, by virtue of that free-will which they are all equally indued with.”¹¹⁶

3. The Reasons of the Freedom of Human will

Edwards also discusses in detail why human will should be free and voluntary. First, according to him, an action which does not have “a free and voluntary principle” cannot be regarded as human action:

We don’t suppose men to be brutes, much less to be machines, and mere clock-work; we don’t take them to be senseless stocks, but we look upon them as that classis of beings which are endued with rational natures, and consequently were made not only with reason and understanding, but with will and choice. And this will is free, and is the mistress of her actions; and indeed it would be no will, unless it were such.¹¹⁷

For Edwards, human beings were created as rational creatures and this rational nature of human beings is accompanied with free and voluntary action of the will which comes

¹¹³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 259. Concerning the freedom of men, Edwards first supposes that God only possesses absolute freedom. On the contrary, he argues that man also has “a degree of freedom.” Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 260.

¹¹⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 260.

¹¹⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 260.

¹¹⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 260-61.

from the function of reason and understanding. That is, men as rational beings were born to have freedom of the will. Thus, he states that it is “proper to a rational creature to have liberty of will.”¹¹⁸ Edwards claims that forced act is not human beings’ own act. Instead, he insists that the actions of men should include the elements of choice and freedom.¹¹⁹

Second, Edwards claims that since the nature of virtue and vice absolutely requires the freedom of the will, the will must be free. According to him, a mere external action itself does not determine the nature of the action as either good or evil. Rather, Edwards holds that “a principle of approbation and love” determines whether a certain action is good and virtuous or not. Therefore, he states that “willingness, freedom, and choice (which cannot possibly be separated from approving and loving) are necessarily required to all virtue and goodness.” Likewise, Edwards insists that only voluntary action can be sin because sin is a voluntary evil. Consequently, for him, the freedom of the will is the foundation of both all virtue and vice.¹²⁰

Edwards deals with a related issue: why the actions of beasts or inanimate creatures cannot properly be regarded as evil and vicious. He asserts that their actions lack “this free principle: choice or deliberation.” The choice or deliberation is absolutely requisite to an evil action. Thus, Edwards claims that the actions of brutes and inanimate things cannot be charged with faults and crimes.¹²¹ Thus, for him, rational beings only have free choice.

The next reason is the consequence of the above two reasons: no action can be praised or dispraised and rewarded or punished if it is not free. More specifically, he explains that if human beings’ action is forced or coerced, that action is not theirs, and if

¹¹⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 261.

¹¹⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 261.

¹²⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 261. Edwards relies on Philemon 1:14 and Augustine’s statement “Peccatum usque adeo voluntarium malum est, ut nullo moto sit peccatum, si not sit voluntarium.” In Augustine’s *De vera religione* chapter 4. Quoted from Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 261.

¹²¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 262.

it is not theirs, they should not be praised or rewarded.¹²² Edwards thus claims that “dispraise (as well as praise) and punishment (as well as reward) suppose the action to be voluntary.”¹²³ This shows that Edwards follows a deep-rooted tradition that conceives of freedom in terms of accountability – in terms of whether an agent is justified in being rewarded or punished for her action.

III. Free Choice in the Different Stages of Human Beings

In its understanding of human freedom, Reformed theology has followed an Augustinian paradigm of the fourfold state of human beings.¹²⁴ This four-state model describes the different situations in which man finds himself in relation to God and the good, noting distinctions between spiritual state of the will before and after the fall, after regeneration, and in glory.¹²⁵ In particular, this classic theological model bequeathed to the Reformed from Augustine is known by the Latin expressions, *posse non peccare* (able not to sin before the fall), *non posse non peccare* (not able not to sin after the fall and before conversion), *posse peccare et non peccare* (able to sin and not to sin after conversion), and *non posse peccare* (not able to sin in glory).¹²⁶

¹²² Concerning the voluntary nature of sin, Edwards quotes Jerome, “Liberi arbitrij nos condidit Deus; nec ad virtutem, nec ad vitia necessitate trahimur; alioquin ubi necessitas est, nec damnation nec corona est.” In *Adv. Jovinian*, lib II. Quoted from Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 262.

¹²³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 262.

¹²⁴ Richard A. Muller, “Freedom,” in *The Westminster Handbook to Reformed Theology*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Louisville: WJK, 2001), 88. For example, *Synopsis purioris theologiae* states that “Atque hoc respectu pro ratione variantis conditionis et status hominis, varie liberum arbitrium considerandum est, nempe vel in statu creationis et integritatis, vel lapsus et corruptionis, vel gratiae et reparationis, vel denique gloriae et perfectionis.” *Synopsis purioris theologiae*, 147.

¹²⁵ The basic components of the model have its root in Augustine. Augustine, *Enchiridion*, chapter 118, *De Correptione et Gratia* XII.33 and *De Civitate Dei* XXII.30. However, mediaeval thinkers such as Bernard of Clairvaux, Hugo of St. Victor and Peter Lombard elaborated it further. Karl Rudolf Hagenbach, *A Text-book of the History of Doctrines II*, trans. Henry B. Smith (New York: Sheldon & Co, 1862), 21; Artur Michael Landgraf, *Dogmengeschichte der Frühscholastik I: Gnadenlehre* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1952), 99; Van Asselt, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 44.

¹²⁶ See, for instance, Thomas Boston, *Human Nature in its Fourfold State*, (1720; reprint, London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1964). On the basis of Augustinian language, Boston deals with the nature of man in the fourfold state and covers matters relating to the free will and choice of man throughout the work.

Therefore, any discussion of Reformed doctrine of free choice must take into consideration the different states of man's history.¹²⁷ In this regard, it will be very helpful to examine Edwards' understanding of the nature of human freedom in light of prelapsarian, postlapsarian, redeemed, and glorified states of mankind. The study of Edward's doctrine of free choice with reference to a particular state of human existence is needed, especially in order to appreciate the various nuances that he applies to free choice in each state of human beings. This type of comparison with explicit presentation of the fourfold state of human beings will help us acquire a more clear and comprehensive picture of Edward's doctrine of free choice.

1. Free Choice in the Prelapsarian State

Edwards does not provide much information concerning the state of the first man. Nevertheless, he describes the significant features of the state of Adam and Eve before the fall. First of all, Edwards argues that Adam was made after the image of God in righteousness and holiness.¹²⁸ Adam particularly possessed original righteousness. According to Edwards, original righteousness refers that "which man was first created in; which consisted in a perfect enlightning the understanding, to know God's will; in the compliance of the will and affections with what is known; and in obedience of the sensitive appetite to these superiour powers."¹²⁹

¹²⁷ For example, Turretin states that "Since man can be viewed in a fourfold state- the instituted (*instituto*) of nature, the destitute (*destituto*) of sin, the restored (*restituto*) of grace and the appointed (*praestituto*) of glory – his liberty ought also to be considered in different ways in reference to them." Turretin, *Institutes*, XIII.I.I.

¹²⁸ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 13.

¹²⁹ Edwards, *Veritatis Redux*, 276.

Edwards also claims that Adam possessed free choice in the prelapsarian state.¹³⁰

By free choice, mankind was able to do good things that are truly pleasing to God.

According to Edwards, however, this freedom of choice consists in indifference to both what is good and what is bad.¹³¹ It seems then that Edwards' assertion that Adam had freedom of indifference does not quite fit to the general Reformed understanding of the state of innocence. In the Reformed view, Adam was not given indifference to good and evil in the state of innocence because the Reformed regard an original indifference to good or evil as a flaw in the creature. Instead, the traditional Reformed thinkers hold that Adam was created good and righteous, "with the ability to continue in the good."¹³²

According to them, Adam's freedom was "a freedom to be obedient, not a freedom to obey or refuse to obey, i.e., not a freedom of acting or not acting."¹³³ The Reformed teach

¹³⁰ The Reformed writers tend to ascribe the three kinds of freedom to human beings: freedom from sin, from misery and from coercion. This well-known distinction was originally made by Bernard of Clairvaux to point at different sorts of freedom that should not be confused in the discussion of *liberum arbitrium*. Bernard distinguished three kinds of freedom, "triplex libertas is ab necessitate cogente... ab peccato... ab miseria." Bernard of Clairvaux, *De gratia et Libero Arbitrio*, VIII. 24 (*Patrologia Latina* 182. 1014). Vermigli is one example who employs this distinction. He states that "Finally, those who distinguished three kinds of freedom seem to have spoken correctly. One is the freedom from constraints of necessity and is common to both godly and ungodly, for the human will cannot be constrained. Another that they posit is freedom from sin which the unrighteous by no means have while the regenerate enjoys it in part, as was noted already. The third freedom is from anxiety, which the wicked lack, but which we have to a certain extent. For though tossed by various misfortunes, yet by hope we are saved from both sin and anxiety; when we have reached the fatherland, we will have complete freedom. Let these things do in regard to free will." Peter Martyr Vermigli, "Free Will," in *Philosophical Works: On Relation of Philosophy to Theology, The Peter Martyr Library*, vol. 4, ed. and trans. Joseph C. McLelland. (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 1996), 319. Even though Edwards does not explicitly employ this distinction, it is certain from his discussion that for him man was free from all three necessities in Paradise.

¹³¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 247. Edwards argues that "Adam had this freedom of will both to what was good, and to what was bad. From the precept given him in paradise we argue the former: By the event we conclude the latter, for he being defectible, abus'd his liberty, and turn'd from God, and brought misery on himself and others." *Ibid.*, 247-48.

¹³² Richard A. Muller, "liberum arbitrium," in *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 177. For instance, Ridgley states that "Our first parents had this freedom of will or power to retain their integrity, appears from their being under an indispensable obligation to yield perfect obedience, and liable to punishment for the least defect in it... they had a power to stand or a liberty of will to choose that which was conducive to their happiness." Ridgley, *Commentary on the Larger Catechism*, 391.

¹³³ In other words, Muller states that "It was a freedom to do the good apart from external compulsion with the will itself as the sole efficient cause of its choice. Thus, the Reformed disagree with

that Adam was mutable rather than indifferent in the state of innocence.¹³⁴ Therefore, according to the Reformed, “the will is never indifferent, either before or after the fall.”¹³⁵ For example, Gill argues that “The will of man, considered in every state he has been, is, or shall be in, is determined to good or evil, and does not stand in equilibrio, in an indifference to either.”¹³⁶ For Ridgley, mankind was not indifferent but inclined to good only in prelapsarian state:

Man, as fallen, is by a necessity of nature inclined to sin. It was otherwise with him before his fall; when, according to the constitution of his nature, he was equally inclined to what is good, and furnished with every thing which was necessary to his yielding that obedience which was demanded of him.¹³⁷

Boston similarly insists as follows:

The freedom of will that man had in the state of innocence was different from all these. In that state, he had a freedom of will both to good and evil; and so had a power wholly to choose good, or wholly to choose evil: which differences it from the freedom of will in the state of grace. He had a free will to good, yea, the natural set of his will was to good only, Eccl. 7:29, being “made upright;” but it was liable to change through the power of temptation, and so free to evil also, as mournful experience has evidenced. Man was created holy and righteous, and received a

the Lutheran view of free choice as arising out of an indifference of the will or out of a freedom to act or not act (i.e., suspension of willing).” Muller, “*liberum arbitrium*,” 177.

¹³⁴ For example, see Burman who clearly argues that human condition was mutable rather than indifferent. He states that “XIV. Ac in statu quidem integritatis homo ponitur libertatem habuisse ad, instar bilancis, neutram in partem inclinantis, dum justitia originali praeditus usum ejus in potestate haberet, & ad bona malaque ex aequo foret indifferens. Quod tamen minus accurate dicitur, cum non tam indifferens, quam mutabilis conditus fuerit: non enim sinebat eum imago Dei indifferentem ac dubium esse, sed ad bonum potius determinabat; quos motus tamen negligere, & a rectitudine sua deflectere, ac in certamine deficere poterat. Imo nullo in statu homo proprie indifferens fuit, sive integro, sive corrupto, cum semper voluntas ipsius, aut bonis aut malis habitibus instructa, vel in bonum vel in malum ferri debeat. XV. In statu ergo integritatis vere liber erat, non naturaliter solum, sed & moraliter; quipped sanctus & purus, omnique mala cupidine intactus, soli autem justitiae deditus ac servus, quae vera hominis libertas est.” Frans Burman, *Francisci Burmannii Synopsis theologiae & speciatim oeconomiae foederum Dei : ab initio saeculorum usque ad consummationem eorum*. (Amstelaedami, 1699), 466.

¹³⁵ Muller, “*liberum arbitrium*,” 177. See also Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics: Setout and Illustrated From the Sources*, ed. Ernst Bizer, trans. G. T. Thomson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 242-245.

¹³⁶ Gill, *The Cause of God*, 8.

¹³⁷ Ridgley, *Commentary on the Larger Catechism*, 391.

power from God constantly to persevere in goodness, if he would! yet the act of perseverance was left to the choice and liberty of his own will.¹³⁸

Turretin provides more detailed statements on this issue. He denies the freedom of indifference in Paradise on three arguments. First, freedom as indifference conflicts with “the nature of the will which necessarily follows a dictate of the intellect.” Second, it is repugnant with “the state of creation in which the created will was very good.”¹³⁹ Third, it contradicts the law given to man, commanding him to love God with all his mind and strength.¹⁴⁰

Is then Edwards different from the Reformed in this issue? It is hard to say. We cannot exactly know what Edwards means by defining Adam’s freedom as indifference in the state of innocence because he does not discuss it in detail. We might infer its meaning from the context of his discussion: When he refutes Arminian doctrine of freedom as indifference, the main issue for him is whether human beings can do spiritual good or not before the regeneration. Therefore, what Edwards tries to say by arguing that Adam had indifference of the will at the Paradise might be: (1) before the fall Adam was not predisposed either to good or to evil, and yet, he had free choice (*liberum arbitrium*), and (2), by this free choice, Adam was able to do spiritual good that truly pleases God at the Garden of Eden. Similarly, considering his discussion of human freedom as indifference in earthly matters after the fall,¹⁴¹ we may surmise that Edwards may have simply tried to state here that human beings had freedom of choice in regard to the spiritual matters at the Paradise though they lost it after the fall. Moreover, in previous part of *Veritas Redux*, Edwards clearly explains the nature of the will of Adam as mutable rather than indifferent:

¹³⁸ Boston, *The Body of Divinity*, 176.

¹³⁹ He claims that “It would not have been very good, if it had been disposed to vice equally with virtue.” Turretin, *Institutes*, VIII.I.VIII.

¹⁴⁰ Turretin, *Institutes*, VIII.I.VIII.

¹⁴¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 252.

It seem'd good to the all-wise creator to leave our first parents to themselves and their own strength, and the mutability of their wills, and not to vouchsafe them an extraordinary aid and power. He might have hindr'd the Fall, but he would not. Tho' he knew they would miscarry without the assistance of special grace, yet he was not pleas'd to confer it upon them.¹⁴²

This quotation makes more persuasive the argument that Edwards' use of the term, freedom as indifference in the prelapsarian state simply means that before the fall, Adam had the freedom of contrary choice with regard to the spiritual matters by his own free choice. However, since he does not provide enough information on it, it is still hard to figure out what Edwards means by saying that Adam had a freedom of indifference before the fall. In my opinion, it is better to leave it undetermined.

The cause of the fall was another issue in Edwards' discussion of the state of innocence. Edwards teaches that mankind was created with a possibility to do evil with free choice.¹⁴³ However, he claims that nothing in human nature or God's decree compelled human beings to sin and fall. Moreover, Edwards clearly insists that God is not the author of sin.¹⁴⁴ Instead, Edwards strongly argues that the misuse of human free choice caused the fall.¹⁴⁵ He states that "For he being defectible abus'd his liberty, and turn'd from God, and brought misery on himself and others. And as this was the Freedom

¹⁴² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 101.

¹⁴³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 247.

¹⁴⁴ One of the points of contention that arises here is the charge that Reformed view of God's sovereignty makes God the author of sin because sin is unavoidable due to God's decree. This was also one of the most significant issues in Edwards' controversy with Arminians. I will discuss in detail Edwards' understanding of the cause of sin in chapter 6.

¹⁴⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 248. Boston also states that "How they fell. They fell of their own free-will, being left to their freedom, ver. 6, The woman saw that the tree was good for food, &c. There was no force or compulsion here; all proceeded from free choice. Their eyes saw the fruit, their hearts coveted it, their hands took it, and their mouths ate it. The doctrinal truth deducible from the text is, Doctrine: "Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created by sinning against God." 174. He also states that "Man being thus left to the freedom of his own will, abused his liberty in complying with the temptation, and freely apostatised from God. And so man himself, and he only, was the true and proper cause of his own sinning. Not God, for he is unchangeably holy; not the devil, for he could only tempt, not force: therefore, man himself only is to blame; Eccl. 7:29, "God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." Boston, *The Body of Divinity*, 182

which our first parents had, so all of us in them were indued with it, because they represented us.”¹⁴⁶ According to Edwards, Adam might have stood if he willed, since it was only by his own free choice that he fell.¹⁴⁷ Adam could have not sinned particularly because there was soundness of mind and freedom of will to choose the good. Therefore, for Edwards, the creation of man with free choice in the prelapsarian state renders the charge that God is the author of sin null and void.

In sum, even though Edwards’ understanding of Adam’s possession of freedom as indifference in the prelapsarian state is not unclear, it is certain that in Edwards’ view, Adam was able to genuinely choose between good and evil by his free choice. Adam, in other words, was under no compulsion nor was he predisposed to act one way or the other before the fallen state.

2. Free Choice in the Postlapsarian State

Throughout his works, Edwards deals with various aspects of human beings in the postlapsarian state. The heart of the issue may be summarized in terms of continuities and discontinuities with respect to human beings in the fallen state in contrast to them as he was originally created. In Edwards’s understanding, a radical change takes place in human beings after the fall. This change is so radical that it entails the soul’s total corruption in every part.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 247-48. Instead of the term, “mutable,” which was commonly used by the Reformed to explain the condition of Adam in paradise, Edwards also states that Adam was “defectible.” Cf. Gill states that “The will of man, in a state of innocence, was indeed mutable, and capable of being wrought upon and inclined to evil.... Consider, therefore, the will in very rank of beings, its liberty does not consist in an indifference or indetermination to good and evil.” Gill, *The Cause of God*, 8.

¹⁴⁷ Here, Edwards relies on Augustine’s teaching in *De correptione & gratia* that, even though the help of grace of God was bestowed upon Adam, it was a kind of grace that Adam could forsake if he wants.

¹⁴⁸ Edwards states that “Every part of man is corrupted,” and “all the powers of his soul and body are depraved.” Edwards, *Veritatis Redux*, 283. Edwards does not discuss the difference between the damages to the natural and supernatural gifts. Cf. For Calvin, “with the severe damage done to the soul in the fall,” the natural gifts have been corrupted and the supernatural gifts withdrawn. By the supernatural gifts, he means “the light of faith and righteousness, which would have been sufficient for the attainment of heavenly life and everlasting felicity.” The natural gifts refer to the intellect and the will. Calvin teaches

Edwards gives a detailed description of the depravation of human nature after the fall. First, he insists that human intellect is disordered and impaired:

There is ignorance of things that should be known, there is difficulty of learning and dullness to conceive that which is good. There are vain thoughts, easiness to be deluded, rashness, indiscretion, doubting, unbelief; there is putting light for darkness, and darkness for light, embracing of error and falsehood, and lastly a subtilty and wisdom to contrive that which is evil.¹⁴⁹

Second, Edwards claims that human will is significantly defected:

the defects of the will are as considerable, namely, its impotency to will that which is good; its inconstancy, instability, and unsettledness in all holy resolves and purposes; its negligence and carelessness as to what is virtuous and religious; and on the contrary, its fierce and impetuous inclination to that which is evil, its blind rushing on any thing that is unlawful, and opposite to God's law; its stiffness, stubbornness, and presumption, in every thing of that nature.¹⁵⁰

More specifically, Edwards teaches that, after the fall, human beings lost "the self-determining power" of the will in spiritual matters:

The self-determining power of the will, we have learnt from the Sacred Scriptures, that tho' a man is endowed with a self-determining power as to common and secular things, yet he hath had none in spiritual ones since his fall. It is not denied, that a creature may be created with such a power even in spiritual things; and our first parents, and we our selves in them, had this granted to us, but we have lost it. And therefore now the determining of the will in the things of God is his sole act, without any concurrence of man.¹⁵¹

Edwards also discusses how memory and affections are pervaded with sin.

Concerning the corruption of man's memory, he describes that "the vicious disposition of the memory—its natural disability to retain that which is good, its dullness, its downright forgetfulness; also its capacity and forwardness of retaining error, vanity, naughtiness,

that even though the natural gifts are preserved even after the fall, they are severely corrupted. In sum, the nature of human corruption is that "soundness of mind and integrity of heart were, at the same time, withdrawn, and it is this which constitutes the corruption of the natural gifts." Calvin, *Institutes*, II. ii. xii.

¹⁴⁹ Edwards, *Veritatis Redux*, 283.

¹⁵⁰ Edwards, *Veritatis Redux*, 283.

¹⁵¹ Edwards, *Veritatis Redux*, 323.

and whatever we should not remember.”¹⁵² Edwards elaborates the depravity of the affections as follows:

We are inordinate in our loving and hating, our hopes are terminated on undue objects, we fear where no fear is, our joys are vain and flashy, our sorrow is unreasonable and ill-grounded, our anger is misplaced, our desires are perverse, we are excessive and immoderate in our care and solicitude about worldly things. By an inbred propensity we long for what is forbid; and generally an exorbitant self-love is mixt with all our passions.¹⁵³

Finally, Edwards claims that the priority in the soul is disordered because of the fall. He states that the fall caused the inferior and sensitive power of the soul to dominate its superior power. More specifically, “The body perverts the mind, and sensuality overmasters reason; so that we pass by what is best, and prosecute the worst; and we will do what we please, even in defiance of all arguments and persuasion.”¹⁵⁴

In a word, Edwards states that, due to the fall of mankind, “An universal corruption hath seiz’d on the whole man, understanding, conscience, will, memory, affections, and both body and soul have contracted a viciousity and malignity.”¹⁵⁵ Especially, Edwards teaches that the severe damage done to the soul in the fall primarily results in the loss of human free choice.¹⁵⁶ Therefore, he maintains that “all of us are naturally in a state of impotency, depravity, and corruption, which is accompanied with

¹⁵² Edwards, *Veritatis Redux*, 284.

¹⁵³ Edwards, *Veritatis Redux*, 284.

¹⁵⁴ Edwards, *Veritatis Redux*, 284.

¹⁵⁵ Edwards, *Veritatis Redux*, 284.

¹⁵⁶ The Reformed typically locates free choice in the supernatural gifts, though they concede that the natural gifts endure in a severely corrupted state in the fall. Hence, fallen man does not possess freedom of choice since the supernatural gifts have been taken away in the fall. Cf. Calvin states that “the light of faith as well as righteousness, which would be sufficient to attain heavenly life and eternal bliss. . . . Among these are faith, love of God, charity toward neighbor, zeal for holiness and righteousness. All these, since Christ restores them in us, are considered adventitious, and beyond nature: and for this reason we infer that they were taken away.” Calvin, *Institutes*, II. ii. xii.

an unwillingness and averseness to conform our selves to the will of heaven.”¹⁵⁷ In sum, according to Edwards, “Every man before his conversion is a dead man; he is a mere carcase, and inanimate lump, and he hath no more ability to convert himself, than a dead man hath to raise himself to life.”¹⁵⁸

Here, in order to understand Edwards’ the influence of the fall on human nature, we should keep in mind the distinction between free choice and the faculty of will. For Edwards, even after the fall, the faculty of will (*voluntas*) itself is not destroyed, but only the ability to use it rightly. In other words, after the fall human beings have lost the freedom from sin and from misery, but they remain endowed with the natural freedom from necessity. This distinction is significant because previous scholars’ common charge that the Reformed doctrine of original sin or total depravity of human beings rules out any human freedom does not apply to Edwards’ case. Unlike the charge, for Edwards, the essential nature of a will or freedom from coercion has not been lost even after the fall.¹⁵⁹

This distinction is commonly found in the writings of other Reformed thinkers, as well. For example, Vermigli makes a distinction between free choice and the faculty of will, reaffirming the status quo that the faculty of will is not destroyed. Concerning this, he states that “the reason and will, which belong unto nature, were left unto man after his fall: but that the same nature is imperfect and wounded, they themselves cannot deny.”¹⁶⁰

Calvin more clearly distinguishes between free choice and the faculty of will:

¹⁵⁷ Edwards also writes that “there is a positive corruption and real depravation. There is not only an indisposition and averseness to what is good, but a strong disposition and propension both in soul and body to what is evil.” Edwards, *Veritatis Redux*, 276.

¹⁵⁸ Edwards, *Veritatis Redux*, 317.

¹⁵⁹ This is evident throughout his writings. For example, for Edwards, regardless of the states, man’s will is always free from any coercion. Edwards, *Veritatis Redux*, 258-59.

¹⁶⁰ Vermigli, *Common Places*, 254. “Equidem hic non multum pugnabo, ut negem rationem & voluntatem, quae ad naturam pertinent, homini post lapsum relicta esse. Sed eandem naturam mutilam & vulneratam esse, naturam pertinent, homini post lapsum relicta esse.” Vermigli, *Loci Communes*, 154.

Let us remember, therefore, that will [*voluntatem*] in man is one thing, and the free choice [*liberam ... electionem*] of good and evil another: for freedom of choice [*eligendi liberate*] having been taken away after the fall of the first man, will [*voluntas*] alone was left; but so completely captive under the tyranny of sin, that it is only inclined to evil.¹⁶¹

On the basis of Bernard's threefold distinction of human freedom, Girolamo Zanchi (1516-1590) insists that mankind retains freedom from coercion even after fall:

So, it is clear what we said in the Thesis, that man after the fall, although he is made both slave of sin, and bound to many miseries, still has not lost altogether all freedom of choice. For he retains and always will retain the natural freedom which is called the freedom from coercion, as was abundantly explained.¹⁶²

Synopsis purioris theologiae also states as follows:

In the state of corruption, having been naturally born by man and confined by original sin, however, man did not lose (though total corruption is granted) understanding in the intelligence and did not lose natural liberty of election in the will, but man retained natural faculties, with substance of the soul, which are principles of actions, and remote and passive power of undertaking the opposite; but he lost uprightness and goodness in the intelligence and the will, but on the contrary he accepted contrary evil habit.¹⁶³

In a similar vein to other Reformed writers, Gill makes a distinction between moral liberty of the will and natural liberty of it and claims that natural liberty of the will still remains in sinners:

We allow that man has a faculty and power of willing and doing things natural, but not a power and faculty of willing and doing things spiritual; we own that this disability is destructive to his soul and spirit; if by being destructive, is meant being

¹⁶¹ John Calvin, *Selected Works of John Calvin: Tracts and Letters*, trans. Henry Beveridge. vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 113; idem, *Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia*, eds Guilielmus Baum, Eduardus Cunitz, and Eduardus Ruess, (Brunsvigale: C.A. Schwetschke et Filium, 1863-1889), 7:446.

¹⁶² "Ergo manifestum est, quod in Thesi diximus: hominem post lapsum etsi factus est feruus peccati, multisque miseriis obnoxius: eum tamen non omnem peius arbitrij libertatem amisisse. Retinet enim & semper retinebit naturalem libertatem, quae a coactione libertas appellatur: ut abude explicatu est." Girolamo Zanchi, *Opera theologicorum*, tomus quartus, (Geneva: 1617-19), col. 89-90.

¹⁶³ "In statu porro corruptionis, seu in homine naturaliter tantum genito, et originali peccato obstricto, quamvis is (licet totus corruptus) non amiserit, ut in intelligentia intellectionem, ita neque in voluntate naturalem libertatem electionis, sed retinuerit cum animae substantia naturales ejus facultates, quae actionum sunt principia, et potentiam remotam et passivam suscipiendi contrarii; attamen amisit, ut ab intelligentia, ita et a voluntate rectitudinem et bonitatem, imo contrarium habitum vitiosum accepit." *Synopsis purioris theologiae*, 148.

injurious to the well-being of it, to its spiritual and eternal welfare, unless the grace of God takes place; but if by it is meant, that it is destructive to the natural powers and faculties of the soul and spirit, this must be denied; for though the moral liberty of the will is lost by sin, yet the natural liberty of it remains.... So that the doctrine of man's disability to that which is spiritually good, is not destructive of any of the natural faculties of the soul or spirit, nor of the will, nor of the natural liberty of it.¹⁶⁴

Clearly, for Edwards and other Reformed writers such as Vermigli, Calvin, Zanchi, and Gill, the human fall does not destroy the faculty of will itself and so, even after the fall, mankind remains endowed with the natural freedom from compulsion.

Edwards, therefore, argues that human liberty is not totally taken away by sin. Instead, some liberty still remains to human beings.¹⁶⁵ According to him, this freedom is even found in religious matters:¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Gill, *The Cause of God*, 184.

¹⁶⁵ The Reformed orthodoxy generally affirms the power of some freedom in human beings. For example, Vermigli maintains that some freedom is found particularly in civil and moral works. He particularly insists that historical figures such as Scipio, Pompey, Caesar, Cato, and Cicero possessed exceptionally excellent powers in achieving public good and well-being of countries, though they were not Christians. Vermigli, *Loci Communes*, 155-56; idem, "Free Will," 274-76. Vermigli also enumerates some historical figures who were prominent at the law such as Solon, and Numa. Vermigli, *Loci Communes*, 153. Burman succinctly summarizes concerning the remaining freedom in human beings: "Haec autem libertas per lapsum perdita est, ut supra vidimus; quod non demonibus ejus actibus, vel naturalibus, vel civilibus, vel qualibuscunque moraliter bonis, quomodo etiam Ethnicorum virtutes admirari solemus; sed de actibus spiritualiter & vere bonis intelligendum est, ad quod nulla ipsi potential vel libertas ultra superset; adeo ut, licet & libere, nihilominus necessario in malum tantum feratur, nec quicquam boni praestrae possit. Atque hoc respectu liberum arbitrium nunc servum est." Burman, *Synopsis theologiae*, 466-67.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Gill gives an elaborated explanation on this. He distinguishes three realms which natural freedom of human beings could be found: "1. It will be allowed that the human will has a power and liberty of acting, in things natural or in things respecting the natural and animal life; such as eating, drinking, sitting, standing, rising, walking, etc. The external parts, actions, and motions of the body, generally speaking, are subject to, and controllable by the will; though the internal parts, motions, and actions of it, are not so, such as digestion of food, secretion of it to various purposes and uses, nutrition and accretion of the several parts of the body, circulation of the blood, etc., all which are performed without the consent of the will. 2. The will of man has a liberty and power of acting in things civil, such as relate to the good of societies, in kingdoms, cities, towns, and families; as obedience to magistrates, lawful marriage, education of children, cultivation of arts and sciences, exercise and improvement of trades and manufactures, and every thing else that contributes to the good, pleasure, and advantage of civil life. 3. Man has also a power of performing the external, parts of religion, such as praying, singing praise of God, reading the scriptures, hearing the word of God, and attending on all public ordinances. So Herod heard John gladly, and did many things in a religious way, externally. Men. may also give to every one their own, do justice between man and man, love such as love them, live inoffensively in the world, appear outwardly righteous before men, and do many things which have the show of moral good, as did the heathen and publicans, and the apostle Paul before conversion." Gill, *The Cause of God*, 9.

And yet too it is to be granted, that all have a power to act in some measure with reference to spiritual things; for there remains yet in man, after his fall, a natural light of reason, and an inbred approbation of moral good, but not an effectual will to embrace it, not a power to perform it, and act according to it, and in a true and right manner, so as to be acceptable to God. Nor is it to be denied, that as to the outward exercise of religion every man hath a free will.¹⁶⁷

In spite of this essential freedom, however, Edwards affirms that sin destroyed our ability to choose and do spiritual good that truly pleases God. Edwards therefore claims as follows:

He hath a natural power to do the external acts of it, as to pray, hear, receive the Lord's supper, and to abstain from some acts of vice: But then it must be said, that he hath no natural strength or will to perform the other acts of religion which are truly spiritual and internal, and which gave the determination of a good and sanctified person. The reason is plain, because original sin and corruption destroy'd this free-will.¹⁶⁸

Now, Edwards' concern is on free will in the sense of freely choosing (*liberum arbitrium*) the good which would result in meriting salvation. When free will is understood in the senses of freedom from necessity-without the connotation of compulsion or coercion-and the ability to choose between spiritual good and evil in the fallen state, Edwards clearly teaches that human will is in a state of bondage. Edwards affirms considerable weakness and bondage which go with human will:

All the will and power he hath, is to encline to evil, and to act it. Thus it is with every man whilst he is in his unregenerate state: He hath no power to will any spiritual and saving good, but the contrary; and this is owing to degeneracy and corruption derived from Adam.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 252-53. 258

¹⁶⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 253.

¹⁶⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 253-54. Edwards also states that "There is not such a freedom of will in men whereby they may either close with the grace of God, or refuse it." This was possible only at the primitive state of innocence in Paradise which are not available to us any more. Our will by nature are free only to that which is evil." Ibid., 255. Cf. Vermigli claims that human liberty is ruined by "its multiple bondage:" "It is a common saying that the will is like a horse on which the Spirit of God and grace sits at one time, the devil at another; sometimes it is aroused by him and other times governed by grace. Its liberty therefore is ruined by its multiple bondage; it is strange that seeing how small is its freedom, especially in this state, the will is called free rather than bound. Considering this, Luther called *arbitrium* rather *servum* than *liberum*." Vermigli, "Free Will," 281. Boston also argues that "There is, in the unregenerate will, an utter inability for what is truly good and acceptable in the sight of God. The natural man's will is in Satan's

In this regard, Edwards opposes the notion that sinful man has free choice. For Edwards, naturally, it follows then that, since human will is so bound by sin and inclined to evil, fallen mankind can do no spiritual good. He once again argues as follows:

All men have lost their ability to do good, by Adam's apostacy and transgression; and by the corruption deriv'd thence they have lost their power of choosing it, as well as acting it... The state of nature renders a man wholly unwilling to any spiritual good, such as will be available to eternal salvation. It is the language of our church in one of her articles, that the condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God.¹⁷⁰

Indeed, according to Edwards, human choice in matter of belief or spiritual matters is limitedly free and primarily bound. Mankind does not have free choice to choose equally between good and evil. Human beings do not have the freedom to accept or reject the gospel.

Edwards particularly uses the case of prayer as an example to prove that fallen will of the mankind cannot perform any good which are acceptable to God. According to him, we pray to God because we are not able to will rightly and do things that are truly pleasing God by ourselves. That is why we sincerely ask God's help through our prayer. However, the opponent's assertion that man still possess an intrinsic power of willing what is good, righteous and holy renders all prayers for grace "useless and insignificant" because we need not beg that strength and power which we have already. Thus, Edwards insists that it is ridiculous to ask God to give us that which we already possess.¹⁷¹ For

fetters, hemmed in within the circle of evil, and cannot move beyond it, any more than a dead man can raise himself out of his grave, Eph. 2:1." Boston, *Human Nature*, 52-53.

¹⁷⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 253. Edwards similarly writes that "tho' the light of reason and moral principles be not extinguish'd by the fall of man, yet it is not by virtue of these that any man can believe and repent, and amend his life. For in this lapsed and corrupt state we are become weak and feeble, important and crazy, so that it is impossible for us to change our selves. Our very wills are not in our own power, and we have no ability and strength of our selves to perform what the divine law requires of us." Ibid., 323.

¹⁷¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 254.

him, the whole tenor of prayer refutes the idea that the mankind still has an ability to do spiritual good even after the fall.¹⁷²

In conclusion, for the state of man after the fall, the freedom of the will is maintained, but in a more limited sense. There is no longer a freedom from all necessity, but only from violent coercion. Especially, when free choice is understood in the sense of the ability to choose between spiritual good and evil, Edwards clearly teaches that man's freedom is in a state of bondage in the fallen state. Therefore, man after the fall is no longer free to choose and fulfill good which pleases God. In other words, the unregenerate are not truly free before they are reborn. In light of all of this, it follows that for Edwards man can do no spiritual good, though Edwards admits that man can do some earthly good.¹⁷³

3. Free Choice in the Redeemed State

Edwards affirms that, since human beings neither can desire nor do spiritual good, the whole conversion of them is due to God's grace.¹⁷⁴ For him, God's grace is so efficacious that it is impossible for human beings to resist the internal call of God and deny the workings of grace.¹⁷⁵ This saving grace is only given to the elect who will

¹⁷² Edwards also quotes a long paragraph from Arminius' work to support his idea on the total inability of the unregenerate state. However, his understanding of Arminius seems to exclude the whole context of his idea. For Arminius, man's choice in matters of doing spiritual and true good is limitedly bound but primarily free. Thus, it does not necessarily support Edwards' understanding of the will in the postlapsarian state. Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 255-56. Headley argues that "With these varying views in mind, we will advocate the position that Arminius believes man's with experiences limited bondage but is primarily and efficaciously free in its fallen condition." Alrick G. Headley, "The Nature of the Will in the Writings of Arminius and Calvin: A Comparative Study" (Th.M. thesis, Calvin Theological Seminary, 2004), 44-45.

¹⁷³ What is more, man is still limitedly free in the sense that man is a voluntary slave to sin and as such sins without compulsion or coercion. In this sense man still possess freedom. This issue will be discussed in detail in chapter 7.

¹⁷⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 323.

¹⁷⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 357-58. I will discuss the relation between divine necessity and human response in the process of regeneration in chapter 7 in detail.

believe.¹⁷⁶ On all accounts, when it comes to the salvation of mankind, Edwards is a monergist.

In comparison to the previous state, what then happens specifically to the freedom of man's choice in the state of grace? According to Edwards, God's saving grace significantly affects human free choice in regeneration. In the previous postlapsarian state, Edwards primarily champions the bondage of human choice in matters of belief. The fall into sin destroys human free choice. Now, however, special grace radically affects human will for the good with effects that match and supersede the radical effects of the fall.¹⁷⁷ Edwards states that, when God's grace is given to the elect, "the divine law is put into the inward parts of the faithful, and written on their heart so that their understandings, wills, affections and consciences are effectually wrought upon."¹⁷⁸ Edwards elaborates this change further:

An inward change in the heart, then, is the first thing in regeneration. True conversion begins there; and consequently the frame and disposition of the man is altered, the inward inclination and bent of his soul are changed: then it is no wonder that holiness is become his very nature and inherent temper.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 334-336.

¹⁷⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 324.

¹⁷⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 324. In a similar vein to Edwards, Boston maintains that "By regenerating grace, the will is brought into a conformity to the will of God. It is conformed to his preceptive will, being endowed with holy inclinations, agreeable to every one of his commands. The whole law is impressed on the gracious soul: every part of it is written on the renewed heart. Although remaining corruption makes such blots in the writing, that oft-times the man himself cannot read it, yet he that wrote it can read it at all times; it is never quite blotted out, nor can be. What he has written, he has written; and it shall stand: "For this is the covenant – I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts," Heb. 8:10. It is a covenant of salt, a perpetual covenant. It is also conformed to his providential will; so that the man would no more be master of his own process, nor carve out his lot for himself. He learns to say, from his heart, "The will of the Lord be done." "He shall choose our inheritance for us," Ps. 47:4. Thus the will is disposed to fall in with those things which, in its depraved state, it could never be reconciled to." Boston, *Human Nature*, 140-41.

¹⁷⁹ Edwards: *Theologia Reformata III*, 36. Calvin also teaches that the believers are given a new disposition of the will through the special grace of God. Calvin, *Institutes*, II, iii, 6. Boston similarly states that "The will is endowed with an inclination, bent, and propensity to good. In its depraved state, it laid quite another way, being prone and bent to evil only: but now, by the operation of the omnipotent, all-conquering arm, it is drawn from evil to good, and gets another turn. As the former was natural, so this is natural too, in regard to the new nature given in regeneration, which has its holy strivings, as well as the corrupt nature has its sinful lustings, Gal. 5:17. The will, as renewed, points towards God and godliness.

In a word, according to Edwards, God gives a “new heart and new spirit” to the chosen.¹⁸⁰ Therefore, when God bestows grace or “a divine principle and spirit” into human will, God’s grace transforms the will so that the will can freely choose what is good.¹⁸¹ The habit of the will is now transformed from slavery in sin to being a servant of righteousness.¹⁸² Edwards argues that through the transformation of the will, believers are released in regeneration from their bondage to sin.¹⁸³ Hence, for Edwards, in this redeemed state, human beings restore the freedom of choice.

In order to illustrate the state of free choice in the redeemed state, Edwards distinguishes the double state of the elect: the elect before conversion and regeneration and after them. In the former case, mankind does not have any freedom to choose good. Instead, they possess the will only to perform evil because “the liberty of the will to good was taken away from all men by Adam’s fall, and consequently from them.” However after regeneration, the freedom to do good “is restor’d to them by Christ, through the operation of the Holy Spirit.” To support this view, Edwards enumerates biblical

When God made man, his will, in respect of its intention, was directed towards God, as his chief end; in respect of its choice, it pointed towards that which God willed.” Boston, *Human Nature*, 140.

¹⁸⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 324. Edwards states that, without them, “none can walk in his ways, and keep his laws and commandments. Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 324; 362; 364. Edwards writes that “God makes the will, which was unwilling, to be willing.” Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 363.

¹⁸² However, Edwards admits that man’s limitation in understanding the matter. He therefore states that “yet it is to be acknowledg’d, that it is impossible for human understanding to reach the exact manner of God’s influencing on mens wills. We cannot have an adequate conception of the nature of the effectual grace of God working on man in conversion, seeing the holy Scripture hath not discovered it to us.” Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 364. Edwards acknowledges that “Wherefore it is in vain to wrangle here, and to enter into solemn contests and altercations; for after all our disputes, some difficulties will remain, and we may not think to resolve them, we may not presume by dint of reason to decide them.” Ibid.

¹⁸³ Edwards continues to maintain a voluntarist view in the redeemed state contrary to Arminius’ intellectualism. This is seen in Edwards’ emphasis upon the will in redemption and sanctification. In particular, we can see that, though not to exclusion of the intellect, attention to man’s will dominates the discussion concerning man’s redeemed state. However, Edwards’ voluntarist leaning should be categorized not as a pure voluntarism but as “a soteriological voluntarism.” Cf. Muller, “*Fides and Cognitio*,” 223.

passages such as John 8:36, Romans 6:18, Romans 8:2, and 2 Corinthians 3:17.

Consequently, for Edwards, only the regenerate can do good which is pleasing to God:

Those that are regenerate by the Holy Ghost, and those only, have a power to will and choose spiritual good. They effectually mortifie their lusts, and resist the evil spirit, and discharge their whole duty aright, because they are endu'd with a supernatural strength. This is the attainment of the regenerate only.¹⁸⁴

Indeed, for Edwards, the free choice that human beings now restore enables them to desire and do true spiritual good.¹⁸⁵ This enablement is the primary element of freedom that man receives in the redeemed state. Edwards argues that human will is now irrevocably bound in the direction of goodness. However, his voluntary freedom from compulsion remains:

Tho' the regenerate act freely, yet that freedom is not an indifferency to both good and evil, it is not an equal enclining to either, but it is a being confin'd to the former, and to that alone. This confinement does not deprive them of true liberty of their wills, and their freedom of acting.¹⁸⁶

In sum, for Edwards, they are now no longer slaves of sin, but the will of the regenerate is confined to the good without any coercion.

Nevertheless, the regenerates still need “the special help of God” in everything that is to be done well.¹⁸⁷ Edwards affirms that all our spiritual ability comes from him.

¹⁸⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 250.

¹⁸⁵ However, that the redeemed man has the free choice to do good does not mean that he now cooperates with God and contributes something to his salvation. Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 330-31. When Edwards talks about doing good here, he has in mind salvific or heavenly good as opposed to various manifestations of general providence in the lives of sinners who do many good and noble things according to purely earthly standards.

¹⁸⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 250-51. Edwards illustrate this feature by explaining how God exerts his infinite power on human wills for making them do good without destroying their wills. He sates that “As to the good, all their actions in religion, and the ways of piety are free and voluntary. Though they are drawn, yet they run, cant. i. 4. Though infinite power is exerted in reclaiming them, yet this is not done with the abolishing of their wills; which is thus expressed by the inspired Psalmist, Psal. Cx. 3. Thy people shall be willing in the Day of thy power. God takes not away the liberty of the will in such cases This is the true and perfect liberty and that which makes good men happy.” Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 259.

¹⁸⁷ The new ability to do spiritual good does not arise, however, merely out of a saved free choice that now acts on its own to aspire to and do spiritual good. The good that regenerate man is able to do arises entirely out of the grace of God through the work of the Holy Spirit who moves and directs the will of man.

He states that “He not only enclines your wills to make a right choice, but he likewise empowers you to conform your practice to that right principle.”¹⁸⁸ Thus, Edwards claims as follows:

sin is from ourselves; but on the contrary he adds, that whatever is good in us is not from ourselves, but from God; every good thought, desire, endeavour, and work, is from above, and it is a gift, and is the result of that divine grace, and the aids of the Holy Spirit which are bestowed upon us.¹⁸⁹

It is now clear that, in this redeemed state, believers possess freedom of choice. However, how well recovered is human free choice? Is he now able to choose between good and evil to the same degree he was able to before the fall? Can believers obey the law perfectly? Does regenerate now possess the possibility of sinning? As Edwards begins to shed light on these questions, he states that the faithful are never so regenerated as to fulfill the law of God perfectly.

According to Edwards, though redeemed human beings are able to do spiritual good through the grace of God that captivates the will, because of the old nature in them they are still able to sin. Edwards claims that strong inclination to evil still exists in respect to the flesh and yet this inclination is placed not in their wills but “in their sensual and carnal part.”¹⁹⁰ Redeemed human beings are primarily free to do spiritual good. However, he is still able to do evil. Edwards teaches that the regenerate “have a will to do evil as well as good ... no perfection in this life, no, not in the most regenerate persons.

¹⁸⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 326.

¹⁸⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 327. Edwards also writes that “for every good work we must have new helps and fresh aids of the spirit. All our acts of holiness are from God, not only as he gives us souls, which are capable of willing, but as he continually actuates them, and by an immediate concurrence inclines directs and determines them.” Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 333.

¹⁹⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 251. Cf. Vermigli argues “Even for the regenerate, the will is still weak so that sometimes it wants the right thing, while at another time it gives in to evil deeds.” Vermigli, “Free Will,” 318. Boston claims that even though the regenerate “choose good freely, by virtue of a principle of grace wrought in them by the sanctifying operations of the Divine Spirit; yet through the remainders of corruption that abides in them, their wills are sometimes inclined to that which is evil.” Boston, *Human Nature*, 134.

There is conflict between the flesh and the spirit....”¹⁹¹ Thus, Edwards is not a perfectionist. Although he accepts the Augustinian position of *posse non peccare*, Edwards also affirms the other half of the Augustinian dictum, *posse peccare*, which applies in the redeemed state as well. According to Edwards, therefore, the regenerate can never obey the law of God perfectly at this stage. For him, they will perfectly perform good works in the final glorified state.

4. Free Choice in the Glorified State

Edwards does not discuss in detail the human free choice in the glorified state. Nonetheless, we do have some clear statements of Edwards that assist us in understanding how he thought about the will and its function in the glorified state. Edwards teaches that in this final stage of human beings, the freedom that was lost in the fall is perfectly renewed and regained in glory.¹⁹²

For Edwards, regeneration restores only part of human freedom. The complete and full restoration of human freedom takes place in glory.¹⁹³ All that was said concerning the blessings of redemption may then be applied to and be magnified in the glorified state. Thus, since one of the blessings of redemption had to do with our release from total bondage to sin—an act that restored free choice in part—we may logically infer that complete and full freedom of choice is present only when there is freedom from the possibility of sinning. According to Edwards, consequently, the freedom of choice that human beings possess in the glorified state is a freedom only to do good—*non posse*

¹⁹¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 250-51.

¹⁹² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 249.

¹⁹³ Cf. Vermigli teaches that in this final stage of human beings, the freedom that was lost in the fall is perfectly renewed and regained in glory: “That seeing in our heavenlie habitation we shall inioie the mot chief felicitie, no kind of libertie can there be found wanting: unless a man will call that a libertie, to be able to sinne, and to fall awaie from God, that is, from the cheife good thing. But because that is a cheife libertie, therefore we hope well, that in that countrie we shall be most free.” Vermigli, *Common Places*, 271; idem, *Loci Communes*, 166.

peccare—considering that there will be no possibility of temptation by evil. Edwards states that “the saints in heaven act freely, and yet choose (as well as do) nothing but what is good; yea, they have no power to do otherwise.”¹⁹⁴ For Edwards, human beings now possess an unfettered free choice to do only spiritual good.¹⁹⁵ In glory, however, they still have free will (*voluntas*). That is, they are still free from compulsion.

IV. Conclusion

The study of Edwards’s view of the nature and definition of free choice permits some conclusions as follows. First of all, Edwards clearly held to the traditional Aristotelian “faculty psychology” according to which the soul (*anima*) could be distinguished into the faculties or parts (*partes*) of intellect (*intellectus*) and will (*voluntas*).

Second, Edwards allows for a clear distinction between the intellective and the volitional aspects of free will. He teaches that intellect and will work together in harmony in order to make a free choice. However, when two things are proposed by the intellect as possibilities, it is the will that determines which of both is the most desirable. For him, the will is a rational faculty. Thus, Edwards holds to the priority of the will over the intellect.

Third, the freedom of indifference was a critical issue in Edwards’ understanding of free choice. However, unlike his predecessors such as Turretin who discusses the issue from the more philosophical perspective, Edwards deals with the issue mainly from the

¹⁹⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 249. Cf. Boston maintains that “In the state of glory, man has a free will to good only. In this state, the blessed choose good freely; and being confirmed in a holy state, they cannot sin.” Boston, *Body of Divinity*, 175.

¹⁹⁵ Burman summarizes the state of free choice in fourfold stage of human beings as: “Atque hisce modis sese habet liberum arbitrium. In statu integritatis determinatum erat ad bonum; quanquam mutabiliter: in statu peccati solummodo ad malum fertur: in statu gratiae rursus ad bonum mutatur & quanquam in particulari actu aberrare possit, in genere tamen & quoad universum statum in bono confirmatum est: donec tandem in statu gloriae indeclinabili dilectione summo suo bono aeternum adhaesurum erit.” Burman, *Synopsis theologiae*, 470-71.

theological perspective, and Edwards' discussion of indifference is bounded by soteriological concerns. Edwards strongly objects to Whitby's assertion that man still possesses a natural power to do spiritual good in the state of sin because the will is always indifferent. However, the sinners choose only evil because original sin and corruption destroyed the ability freely to choose the good and freely to avoid that which is evil. Thus, Edwards firmly claims that the unregenerate cannot be indifferent in spiritual realms any more.

Fourth, Edwards defines free choice as a rational spontaneity. In his definition of free choice, Edwards focuses more on the root of freedom or willing itself rather than on the function of choice. More specifically, in this definition, free choice is not explicitly discussed by Edwards as the possibility to choose opposite things, but only as the spontaneous and voluntary movement of the will. However, it does not necessarily mean that Edwards ignores the function of choice in his explanation of free choice because other passages which deal with the role of choice by the will suggest it.

Fifth, in order to explain the various mode of free choice of the will, Edwards articulates his analysis according to the different states in the history of salvation: before and after the fall, after regeneration, and in glory. As already indicated, there is a great difference between the way free choice functions before and after the fall. Edwards clearly teaches that Adam possessed free choice in the prelapsarian state. In their original condition, humans were capable of not sinning, because the freedom of choice (*liberum arbitrium*) remained whole. In the postlapsarian state, however, human beings lost free choice. Now, since free choice is enslaved to sin, they cannot help but sin, and can do no spiritual good in the fallen state though they can do some earthly good.

Nevertheless, for Edwards, the faculty of will (*voluntas*) is not destroyed even in the postlapsarian state. In other words, the essential nature of will as rational spontaneity has not been destroyed. For Edwards, after the fall, human beings have lost the freedom from sin and from misery, but they remain endowed with the natural freedom from

necessity. This distinction is significant because previous scholars' charge that the Reformed doctrine of original sin or total depravity of human beings excludes any human freedom does not fit to Edwards' case.

Edwards teaches that man restores the free choice in the redeemed state. The primary aspect of freedom of choice that man receives in the redeemed state is the freedom to do spiritual good—a quality that was lost in the fall. Redeemed man is now free to choose well. Unregenerate man is still in bondage to sin with respect to spiritual matters. Thus, in regeneration, the believers are released from their bondage to sin and given a new heart through the special grace of God. According to Edwards, however, the state of the will in the postlapsarian state is not yet perfectly recovered.

Edwards does not deal in detail with the state of free choice in the final state. However, Edwards clearly argues that man restores complete and full freedom of choice in that state. That is, the nature of man is so transformed that he only freely wills what is good in the glorified state. Therefore, there is no possibility of sinning. However, human essential freedom will be preserved because they will necessarily be disposed to do good (*non posse peccare*) without any external compulsion or coercion.

Chapter 4: Edwards on Divine Decree, Predestination, and Human Freedom

I. Human Freedom and Divine Necessity

For Edwards, the relation between divine necessity and human freedom is a significant issue in his doctrine of free choice. If freedom from necessity is, according to him, essential for human beings, it is important to reflect on the exact relation between human freedom and divine necessity. From the previous chapter, it can be clear that slavery by sin and misery does not destroy the most fundamental freedom from necessity. Both Adam before the fall and his posterity after the fall possess this freedom of nature. Therefore, it is clear from Edwards' argument that he interprets the freedom from necessity basically as a freedom from coercion. He strongly holds that coercion is inconsistent with the nature of the will: it would be contradictory to speak of a coerced will.

This relation between human freedom and divine necessity is further established by Edwards' discussion of the relation between divine decree, foreknowledge, and providence, on the one hand, and human free choice, on the other hand. In particular, the study of Edwards' discussion of the issue helps evaluate the legitimacy of the traditional assessment of Reformed doctrine on the relation between divine necessity and human freedom.

The heart of the issue in the discussion is whether God's decree, foreknowledge, and providence exclude human free choice at all or can be reconciled in some way with it.¹ Thus, in chapter 2 of *Veritas Redux*, Edwards asks how human freedom can be compatible with the decree²:

¹ I will deal with divine decree first in this chapter, and divine foreknowledge and providence in chapter 5 and 6, respectively.

² Edwards's discussions of the problems connected with the relationship between human freedom and God's decree are found mainly in *Veritas Redux* (Book II) and *The Arminian Doctrines Condemn'd*.

... How is this liberty consistent with the decree before asserted? For if all things be fix'd and determin'd, then man is lock'd up, and is a prisoner, and no free man. If we be staked down by the irresistible decrees, and our wills be necessarily moved, then nothing that we do is voluntary; for where necessity reigns, our wills are not our own. Where all is done with force and violence, there is no acting out of an inward inclination and free principle; wherefore we must conclude that the divine predestination is inconsistent with man's liberty of will. But notwithstanding this objection, it is most certain that God hath decreed man's actions, and it is as certain that man is free, and therefore to reconcile these is the next thing we have to do.³

Before he launches his own argumentations, Edwards introduces some previous writers' understanding on this issue such as that of Thomas di Vio, Cardinal Cajetan (1469-1534). According to them, this issue cannot be solved by human reason or wisdom on earth.⁴ For Edwards, however, it is "no insuperable task." He maintains that we can solve the problem and "there is a perfect Harmony between the Decrees, yea Absolute Decrees, and the Free Agency of Mankind."⁵

II. Human Beings and Divine Decree

1. The Nature of the Divine Decree

Edwards begins his explanation of the nature of the divine decree with the discussion of the meaning of God's determining whatever occurs in heaven and on earth.⁶ He insists that "God hath from eternity decreed all things that come to pass in time, and all things that shall be to eternal ages."⁷ Edwards elaborates this character further:

.... His decree whereby he hath determin'd what things shall be: whereby he hath purposed to do or not to do such and such things; to permit or not to permit them; whereby he hath appointed how every thing shall happen, in what order and manner they shall be effected: and nothing is done, nothing happens, nothing is effected, but

³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 263.

⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 263-64.

⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 264.

⁶ In his writings, Edwards does not provide detailed scholastic discussions concerning the nature of decree such as a threefold distinction of the divine acts.

⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 1.

according to this divine counsel and will. The decrees are large and comprehensive, and have respect to all causes, effects, and events; all things past, present, and to come, whether they relate to angels, good or bad, or to men, or to any other creatures whatsoever. The eternal decrees reach not only the end, but the means in order to it: they extend not only to persons and things, but to time and place, and all other circumstances belonging to them: which shall be afterwards distinctly and clearly prov'd.⁸

In a word, Edwards teaches that “all natural, and even inanimate things, and their effects and operations” are immovably and unalterably fixed by the decrees of God.⁹

Edwards, however, maintains that the divine decree needs a more particular consideration with regard to human beings; as to both their temporal and bodily concerns, and spiritual ones. In his writings, therefore, he focuses on God’s decree on human beings and deals with it in more detail especially as it refers to the salvation or damnation of human beings.¹⁰

2. Temporal and Bodily Matters and Divine Decree

Edwards distinguishes the divine decree on human beings into God’s decree on temporal and bodily concerns and that on spiritual ones.¹¹ Regarding the former, he claims that “Man’s life here upon earth, and all things appertaining to it” are unchangeably predetermined and fixed.¹² Edwards attempts to prove this with several arguments. He first tries to prove it by the Bible. For instance, Edwards mentions Job 7:1. He insists that this verse informs us concerning God’s predetermination of the end of

⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 2.

⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 2.

¹⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 4.

¹¹ According to the Reformed Scholastics, the decree is commonly distinguished into the *decretum Dei generale* (the general decree of God), which indicates God’s ordination of all things, and the *decretum Dei speciale* (the special decree of God), according to which mankind was predestined to either salvation or damnation. Muller, *Dictionary*, 88. Edwards largely follows this scholastic distinction between God’s general decree and God’s special decree.

¹² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 4. Edwards also states that “Whatever befalls a man through his whole life, from the beginning to the end, is the execution of the divine will and purpose. And more particularly, man’s time on earth is set and appointed.” *Ibid.*, 44.

human life.¹³ Edwards analyzes the original meaning of the text, refers to other passages to support his view, and concludes “That the days and years of all mens lives are fix’d by and eternal decree.”¹⁴ He argues that the life of Jesus Christ is the example of this.

According to Edwards, a comparison of the Old and the New Testaments shows that all of Jesus’ life was predetermined by God and fulfilled according to it.¹⁵ Consequently, he asserts as follows:

So thro’ the whole time of every man’s being here upon Earth, there is nothing left undetermin’d: every particular state of life, all the events and issues of things that happen, are determin’d before-hand. Not only the time, when, and the place, where, but the kind, what, the manner, how, the measure, how much, the end and issue, how long, are fixed by an unerring hand. The scenes of man’s life are all laid out, and every part that is acted, was pre-assign’d by God.¹⁶

In addition to Scriptures, to support his argument, Edwards also quotes Basil of Caesarea (330-379) and many heathen philosophers such as Virgil (70 BC-19 BC) and Seneca (4 BC-AD 65) who assert on the set determination of the time of human life.¹⁷

Next, Edwards tries to prove his argument through the use of theological reasoning. First, God’s omniscience proves the doctrine of the divine decree:

The doctrine of the divine decrees is established on this rational ground, that God is of infinite knowledge. He foreknowing all things of what kind soever, we cannot but

¹³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 5. This was objected particularly by the Socinians and Remonstrants. They tried to prove the mutability of decrees by denying that the term of life is so fixed and determined by the decree of God. Cf. Turretin, *Institutes I*, IV.VI-XXVII (322-329). Concerning this topic, Gisbertus Voetius wrote a significant treatise on this topic. Gisbertus Voetius, *Dissertatio Epistolica, De Termino Vitae* in *Selectae disputationes theologicae* vol. V (Utrecht, 1648-1669).

¹⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 7. Edwards also writes that “So that, whatever thoughts some may have, I apprehend it is most agreeable to the tenour of the Holy Scriptures, that every man’s life is determin’d by God: By an unalterable decree it is ordain’d how long men shall live.... And now seeing it is evident that the times are fixed, and that of human life more especially, who can doubt whether all circumstances of man’s life be fix’d? The place of action and events, no less than the time of them, is determin’d by the divine decree; as wee may gather from variety of instances in Scripture, and more particularly from the wonderful account of the birth-place of Christ...” Ibid., 18-19.

¹⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 19.

¹⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 20.

¹⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 44.

grant that he may easily determine them, and fix the circumstances belonging to them all; especially if we consider, that his knowing of things differs from ours; for he knows them all together, and at once. Nothing is to come, and nothing is past with him, but every thing is present, and therefore it is no wonder that they are fix'd and determin'd by him.¹⁸

For Edwards, the foreknowledge of God and his decree are “reciprocal and inseparable.” He claims that God foresees all things because he wills and determines them. In other words, since God decreed all things, He can foreknow future contingencies. Edwards thus argues that “We can’t tell how God can foreknow the things that are to come to pass, but by his decreeing them to be; for nothing in the whole nature of things in the world can exist without God’s willing it to be.”¹⁹ In this regard, he maintains that all things are seen to God from eternity.²⁰

Second, Edwards asserts that God’s immutability proves the doctrine of divine decree. According to him, unless all actions and events are fixed by God’s counsel and purpose from eternity, God is charged with mutability. He thus insists that, due to God’s immutability, “the most minute circumstances of them” cannot be changed.²¹

Accordingly, Edwards asserts that those who oppose the doctrine of the eternal decrees “call in question these two great and essential attributes of the deity. They do in effect say, that God’s knowledge reaches not to all things, and that his nature and will are changeable.”²²

Finally, Edwards attempts to demonstrate the doctrine of divine decree through the testimonies of “the daily experience of mankind.” Namely, he states that “the course of the world is a demonstration of this, that all things are predestin’d and follow the

¹⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 20-21.

¹⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 21.

²⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 22.

²¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 23.

²² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 22.

current of the eternal decrees.”²³ Edwards specifically mentions three things: (1) the strange and unaccountable events of the world,²⁴ (2) the sickness and diseases,²⁵ and (3) sudden deaths of some and “strange preservation of others.” For Edwards, any satisfactory accounts for these three phenomena cannot be given without acknowledging God’s decree.²⁶ Edwards argues that all these are in the hand of God which governs the world by the eternal counsel and decree.²⁷ Finally, Edwards concludes as follows:

The testimonies in the Sacred Writings are abundant; the reason of the thing itself is bright and manifest: and besides these, fact and experience confirm all; so that the questioning of this truth, is like a man’s denying of motion, who may be confuted by walking; yea, the wagging of his tongue, whilst he denies it, is a sufficient baffle.²⁸

Edwards next deals with several objections against the doctrine of divine decree regarding bodily and earthly matters. First he discusses the objections from Scriptures. For example, Edwards refutes his adversaries’ argument which is grounded on Isaiah 38.²⁹ According to Isaiah 38, Hezekiah was pronounced to die. However, God answers his prayer and allows him to have fifteen more years for his life. For Edwards’ adversaries, this shows that there is no predetermination of the precise duration of human life by an immovable decree.³⁰

²³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 23.

²⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 25. Edwards teaches that ““Look into the world, and observe the strange and unaccountable rising and falling of some persons, against expectation, and without any apparent reason, yea, contrary to the movement and agency of second causes; and then you’ll not be backward to acknowledge the influence of the decretal power: then you will own that many things depend entirely on the purpose of God, and not on the contrivances and endeavours of men.” Ibid.

²⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 25. Edwards writes that “Especially epidemical and infectious distempers are clear indication of the divine destiny.” Ibid.

²⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 27. Edwards adds that “All our philosophical solutions of these phaenomena are vain and idle, and the most serious man can’t forbear laughing at them; but the divine allotment and arbitrement solve all the difficulties about this point.” Ibid.

²⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 28.

²⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 29.

²⁹ Edwards also deals with other passages such as Psalm 55:23, Psalm 102:24, and Ecclesiastes 7:17.

Edwards, however, gives two answers for this case. First, he insists that this is an “extraordinary case” and therefore should not be taken as an argument against the doctrine of divine decree.³¹ Edwards argues that “For tho’ what I have asserted concerning the decrees, be according to the ordinary tenour and strain of Scripture, which we are generally to be guided by, yet there may be some exceptions, and perhaps this is one.” Therefore, even if Hezekiah’s life was not prefixed by the decree, it does not indicate that it applies to other men.³²

Second, Edwards claims that if it cannot be regarded as an extraordinary case, God’s message, “Thou shalt die, and not live,” can be interpreted in two ways. First, he distinguishes the first and second causes and argues that, in respect of the second cause, Hezekiah’s death was imminent and irrevocable.³³ Edwards, nevertheless, insists that, with respect to the first cause, that is, God’s will and decree, Hezekiah’s death was not near.³⁴ He analyzes the original Hebrew to support this view. According to the Hebrew, the phrase “Thou shalt die” does not mean that his death should be at that time by God’s decree.³⁵ Instead, this indicates that “they only denote the great danger he was in respect

³⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 29.

³¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 29.

³² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 30.

³³ The approach to the issue through the distinction between the first and secondary causes was commonly taken by the Reformed thinkers like Voetius and Turretin. For instance, Voetius argues that “Potest ergo utrumque vere & proprie dici, vitam posse abbreviari aut produci & non posse, fatum cujuscunque esse mobile & immobile, diverso scilicet respectu. Si enim effectus comparetur ad causam primam ejusque infallibilem praescientiam & immutabile decretum, est omnino immobilis imo & necessaries necessitate consequentiae non consequentis; sin vero comparetur mors fortuita ad causasa secundas & proximas sua natura contingents, mutabiles aut vertibiles, earumque incertum & mutabilem concursum, mobilis dicendus est.” Voetius, *De termino vitae*, 13. Turretin also insists that “The term of life can be said to be movable or immovable in different senses, either with respect to the tint cause or with respect to second causes.” Concerning the former, it is immovable. Thus, it cannot be prolonged or shortened with respect to the first cause. Turretin, *Institutes I*, IV.VIII (322-23). Edwards’ distinction of the first and the second causes will be discussed in detail in later section of this chapter.

³⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 30.

³⁵ However, Edwards does not provide his analysis of original Hebrew text.

of his sickness.” Thus, for Edwards, the phrase “added fifteen years to his life” does not signify that “his life was really lengthn’d or he liv’d a minute longer than had been everlastingly determin’d.” Instead, it means that “he liv’d fifteen years beyond the time in which he seem’d to be near death.”³⁶

Second, Edwards asserts that the phrase “Thou shalt die and not live” could be understood as “a conditional threatening but absolutely express’d.”³⁷ He states as follows:

So the menacing of Hezekiah with death was conditional, he should die, unless he pray’d and repented; but he did both, and so did not die. He that decreed the end, decreed the means and conditions: He determin’d that Hezekiah should live, that, in order to it, he should pray and repent.³⁸

For Edwards, therefore, divine decree does not deny the necessity of conditions. He asserts that, even though God’s decree is unalterable and fixed, it includes and involves certain conditions to be performed.³⁹ On the basis of his exegesis, Edwards then concludes as follows:

tho’ the temporal sentence of death was revers’d, yet the eternal purpose of God was not alter’d and that Hezekiah’s days were not prolong’d beyond the fixed time; for it was decreed from eternity that he should not die till fifteen years after the denuntiation of death, as the event plainly shews.....⁴⁰

Next, Edwards discusses the objections from human reason: if the term of life is pre-determined, all human effort to preserve the life of human beings such as the use of

³⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 31.

³⁷ Turretin similarly states that “The days of Hezekiah were not prolonged beyond the term fixed by God, but only beyond that time in which (according to the order of secondary and natural causes and the very nature of the disease) he seemed but a step from death and as about to die actually, unless God would graciously interpose. Therefore the denuntiation of death made by the prophet is one of threatening, not one of predestination; not absolute, but conditional (although the condition was not expressed, but only declared by the event). Therefore he had decreed not that Hezekiah should die, but only to denounce the sentence of death against him (so that broken by a salutary sorrow he might the more earnestly have recourse to him).” Turretin, *Institutes I*, IV.V.XIII (325-26).

³⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 31.

³⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 31.

⁴⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 31-32.

medicines is useless. However, Edwards asserts that “God doth generally, and for the most part, conserve and sustain this life in a natural way, and therefore we ought to contribute towards it by using such means as are natural and proper...”⁴¹ He, therefore, insists that the certainty of an event does not exclude the use of medicines or prayers.⁴² Instead, Edwards teaches that “It is his eternal decree that we should use all those ways and methods which he intended should be in order to the things which are to be obtain’d.”⁴³ Herein, as already noted in Hezekiah’s case, we see that Edwards does not deny use of means in his doctrine of decree. Edwards maintains all things are certainly fixed by God’s council and decree. He, nevertheless, asserts that the use of means is not excluded by God’s predetermination. Rather, Edwards teaches that “the means themselves are decreed in order to the end and event.”⁴⁴ Thus, Edwards remarks as follows:

for the divine being that hath decreed such events, hath also decreed that they shall not come to pass, unless such and such a course be taken, and such means be us’d. The decree depends not on conditions, yet there are many conditions belonging to those things which are decreed, and that even by an absolute decree. For we must receive this for a certain truth, that conditions and means are ever suppos’d even in order to an absolute event. God pre-determines absolutely and at once what shall happen conditionally, and in the use of means at several times. Tho’ it is impossible for us to know what is pre-determin’d, yet so far as our reason and the word of God

⁴¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 35. He also maintains that “Thus, tho’ God hath (as I have asserted) decreed the period of every man’s life, yet he hath also decreed that this shall be generally in a natural course.” Ibid., 36.

⁴² Edwards states that “self-preservation is a natural principle and law, and is the command of right reason.” Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 37. This was a position commonly held by Orthodox Reformed thinkers. For example, Turretin also remarks that “So far is the certainty of the end of the event from taking away the necessity and the use of means that it rather supposes them. For by God’s decree, such means were instituted to bring about the futurition of the thing. Although he life of Hezekiah was prolonged so that he could have no doubt about it, he ought not therefore to neglect food, but on the contrary to act in subserviency to the counsel of God in this respect.” Turretin, *Institutes I*, IV.V.XIX (327).

⁴³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 37. He adds that “if God hath pre-ordain’d the means as well as the end, then there is a supersedeas to all care and diligence on our parts; for if the decree hath appointed that means shall be used, they shall be used whether we take care about them or not.” Ibid.

⁴⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 40.

directs us we are to make choice of proper means to compass the end we design and aim at.⁴⁵

In short, for Edwards, God decreed not only the end but also the conditions. Thus, he claims that, even though God's decree does not depend on the means, they should not oppose or neglect the use of means in their life.⁴⁶

III. Spiritual Concerns of Men and Divine Decree

1. Definition and Biblical Ground of Predestination

For Edwards, while the decree of temporal and bodily matters does not have a primarily soteriological function, the decree of spiritual concerns has as its intention the salvation of the elect. Divine decrees as to the salvation or damnation of mankind he calls predestination.⁴⁷ Edwards defines the decree of predestination as follows:

The decree of predestination, as it hath reference to the spiritual state of mankind, is the eternal purpose of God concerning the conferring of grace and glory on a certain number of persons, and concerning the permitting others to persist in their sins, and thereby to bring everlasting misery upon themselves. So that predestination hath two parts, it is either election or reprobation.⁴⁸

In his discussion of the nature of predestination, Edwards first attempts to prove that there exists an eternal election or predestination.⁴⁹ For this purpose, he rebuts the

⁴⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 40-41.

⁴⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 37. Edwards also states that "The decree is hid and secret, tho' it be fix'd and certain: But what we are to do is open and reveal'd..." Ibid. Turretin takes the same position with Edwards concerning this. Turretin writes that "Hence it appears that the aid of physicians, appointed by God to relieve diseases, cannot be neglected without temerity (although entire dependence is not to be placed in them). Nor ought they to cease from their work because they do not know (nor is it necessary that they should) what God has determined concerning the life or the death of the sick man. We must do our duty and leave the result with God. If the term of life has not yet arrived, let him bless the remedies and use them to obtain his purpose. But if he has determined otherwise concerning him, the art of the physician will be in vain (but still he will have done this duty)." Turretin, *Institutes I*, IV.V.XXVII (328).

⁴⁷ Edwards considers the divine decree "as they relate to the spiritual concerns of men, both the actions good and bad, and the conditions of men in those capacities." Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 51.

⁴⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 51.

⁴⁹ Edwards attempts "to settle the truth and reality of the divine decree of election" and fully explain and prove "two parts of it: predestination to grace and to glory." Ibid., 70.

assertion that electing or choosing is meant in another sense in the Bible. For instance, his main opponent Whitby asserts that the word election refers to “no personal election to salvation, but only that of whole nations to some external privilege.”⁵⁰ However, Edwards argues that “the particular and personal election to salvation” is frequently found in the Bible.⁵¹

To prove this, Edwards thoroughly analyzes the usage and meaning of the words in the Old and New Testaments. He admits that, in the Old Testament, *bachur* and *bachurim* (elect, choose, choice) indicates that “God chose the Israelites rather than any other nations to bestow his laws and particular privileges upon them.”⁵² However, Edwards asserts that the expression of choosing or electing in the passages of the New Testament generally refers to “the particular kind of election, namely the eternal decree of God, whereby, out of his mere good will and pleasure, he chose some persons out of the corrupt mass of mankind unto grace in this life, and to salvation and glory in that to come.”⁵³

Edwards provides several texts such as Matthew 20:16, Mark 13:20, Romans 8:27; 28; 29; 33, Ephesians 1:4-6, and Colossians 3:12 which indicate not communities in general but particular persons.⁵⁴ He also presents several verses such as Ephesians 3:9 and Thessalonians 2:13 and states that these places can’t possibly be meant of a temporal election, “a chusing men out of the Jewish or heathen world in time, which the Dr. [Whitby] vainly dreams of, and wholly excludes the election from eternity.”⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 134. This is one of Whitby’s main arguments against Edwards. For the detailed argument of Whitby, see Daniel Whitby, *Four Discourses* (London: 1710), 1-36; idem, *A Discourse*, 1-26.

⁵¹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 134.

⁵² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 52.

⁵³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 54.

⁵⁴ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 135.

⁵⁵ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 137.

Having proved that there is an eternal predestination, Edwards then comes to the detailed analysis of the doctrine. First, he teaches that eternal election consists of two parts: “a choosing some persons before others to partake, (1) of grace and holiness and (2) of life and happiness.” Edwards claims that the latter should be discussed first because “we conceive that in the divine mind, as well as in humane counsels and transactions, the end is first settled and fixed, and then the means in order to the attaining of that end.” However, this does not mean that there is a priority in the decrees. Edwards thus expresses himself cautiously much like other Reformed writers of the era:

Not but that the decrees are all together and at once; for in eternity one thing cannot be before or after another: But humane conceptions consider a priority in the decrees; and for the better explaining of the doctrine of the decrees, we suppose an order and precedency in them, according to what we know of our own reasons and wills, and their operations: and therefore we apprehend that God first decreed the end, and then means to it.⁵⁶

Edwards also adds a standard qualification as follows:

Tho’ (if we speak exactly) all the decrees of God are in themselves but one indivisible act of his will: They were all finish’d together and at once; for being eternal acts of the God-head, one of them cannot possibly be before or after another. But different acts are conceiv’d and apprehended by us, and we imagine a priority of time among them, tho’ in reality there be none. Yet this may be said, there is a priority in nature, and so it is express’d to us here by the Apostle.⁵⁷

In sum, according to Edwards, even though ends and means can be distinguished by the different objects offered to them, ends and means are ontologically one integral and inseparable act of God’s will.⁵⁸

Concerning the means of predestination, Edwards states that, in order to reach future glory and happiness, God has decreed that “we must first be called; that is, we must by the almighty operation of the Holy Spirit, have our minds enlighten’d, and our

⁵⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 63. cf. Cf. Turretin, *Institutes* I, IV, XVIII, XXIV.

⁵⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 86-87.

⁵⁸ Edwards argues that “the eternal election is to be resolved into the will and pleasure of God.” Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 131.

hearts and lives renew'd.”⁵⁹ He also argues that “Election reaches sanctification here, as well as glorification hereafter.” Edwards claims that St. Paul presents “golden chain of salvation” in Romans 8:30. According to him, this chain shows “the order of God’s acting in the grand business of salvation” in these following steps: predestination, vocation, justification, and glorification. Thus, Edwards teaches that glorification is the end, vocation and justification are “the means by which we attain to the end; and predestination reaches to all three.”⁶⁰

2. Limited Application of Decree of Election to Mankind

Next, Edwards argues that the divine decree of election applies only to certain persons. In particular, in order to support this view, Edwards presents a number of scriptural proofs, especially through the analysis of the original meaning of the text, and refutes his adversaries’ interpretations of the biblical texts in detail. For example, he brings in Acts 13:48 to prove this case. Edwards refutes the interpretation of Whitby that the original word “τεταγμένοι” means “disposed or prepared,” noting that this was also the view of Arminius, Socinus, and Grotius. First, he insists that it “never signifies in any author an internal quality or disposition, but always some external ordering, appointing or constituting of things or persons.” Therefore, Edwards claims that the latter is the appropriate meaning of the word in this text.⁶¹ Second, he asserts that in other biblical passages, including the whole book of Acts, the verb refers to “the divine ordination or appointment, even the eternal designation to life and happiness.”⁶²

Besides these, Edwards adds other reasons to support his claim: (1) since the verb is perfect tense, which refers to something that had been long before, it cannot be applied

⁵⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 68.

⁶⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 69.

⁶¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 65.

⁶² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 66.

to the present disposition of the people, (2) Fathers such as Chrysostom agree with Edwards,⁶³ (3) the frequent use of “metaphorical way of speaking” in the New Testament supports his interpretation,⁶⁴ and (4) opponents’ exposition of the verb as “disposed” or “made fit” is refuted by the text itself because it brings an absurd rendering that they were disposed and fit for eternal life before they believed.⁶⁵

Accordingly, Edwards maintains that Whitby’s interpretation of the phrase as “As many as were disposed, believed on eternal life” cannot be warranted. He summarizes Whitby’s problem as follows:

But such an extravagant, needless and arbitrary attempt of altering the grammatical course and syntax of the words, without any occasion or ground, can be attributed to nothing but this worthy writer’s prepossession concerning the decrees, which puts him upon this and other shifts.⁶⁶

Edwards also deals with the interpretation of Acts 20:13 in detail because Whitby cites Acts 20:13 in order to support his exposition of Acts 13:48. Whitby argues that the words “ταττειν” and “ταττεσθαι” in this text indicate “to dispose or make ready, or to be dispos’d or made ready and fit, and these words consequently imply the meaning of “an inward disposition or quality of the mind.” However, for Edwards, this argument is problematic because instead of “ταττειν” and “ταττεσθαι,” “διαταττεσθαι” is used in the original text. Thus, he asserts that unless Whitby proves that “ταττεσθαι” and

⁶³ In *Arminian Doctrines*, Edwards explains this in further detail: Chrysostom renders *τεταγμένοι* as “God’s eternal decree or ordination.” That is, he exposes the text as “as many as were separated and determin’d to eternal life by God.” Edwards also quotes Theophylact and Origen’s interpretations of the text to show they agree with Edwards’ understanding of *τεταγμένοι*. Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 19-20.

⁶⁴ That is, Edwards claims that, as inferred from the common usage among the people, the expressions in the Bible such as “the book of life,” “being written in that book,” and “being written in heaven” implies “the meaning of the great discriminating favour of eternal election.” Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 67-68.

⁶⁵ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 200.

⁶⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 66. Edwards further states that “And to speak impartially, but with due respect to his learning and piety, it may be observ’d, that in order to the avoiding the doctrine of eternal election and reprobation, which are grounded on several texts in the New Testament, no man hath us’d more subtle arts than this writer, as anyone may satisfie himself by consulting his respective paraphrases and annotations on them.” Ibid.

“διαταττεσθαι,” and consequently “τεταγμενος” and “διατεταγμενος” are the same, respectively, Whitby is altering the original text.⁶⁷

Edwards thus claims that “everyone that is but a smatterer in the Greek tongue, knows that δια, being prefix’d to simple verbs, doth oftentimes change the import and propriety of them, as in διαταττεσθαι, διαφέρειν, διαβατειν, and many others.” He insists that “διαταπειν” means “to declare or enjoyn” in Matthew 11:1 and 1 Corinthians 16:1, and thence “διαταγμα,” refers to a command in Hebrew 11:23. Moreover, Edwards argues that they cannot be synonymously used because the writer of Acts used “διαταττεσθαι” four times in the signification of “appointing or determining” in Luke 7:8, Acts 15:2, 22:20, 28:23.⁶⁸

In this way, through the analysis of the Scriptures, Edwards tries to prove that God’s eternal election is applied to the limited number of mankind. Here one can see that Edwards’ use of Scriptures shows two features to note. First of all, his examination of Scriptures shows that Edwards employs pre-critical exegetical methods such as the analysis of original meaning of the text, linguistic, lexical, and grammatical study of the passage, the correlation of texts and the proliferation of supporting testimonies, the use of Church Tradition, and the consideration of the context of the passages. Second, his careful analysis of the Scriptures in the discussion of divine election indicates that Edwards’ doctrine of predestination is firmly grounded on the biblical texts and the exegesis of them.⁶⁹

Meanwhile, this second feature can be a good counterargument against previous scholarship’s charge that Reformed theology is purely speculative and rigidly rationalistic because the whole body of theology is deduced from a single predestinarian ‘central

⁶⁷ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 199.

⁶⁸ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 199.

⁶⁹ Concerning the overview of previous scholarship on this issue, see Richard A. Muller, *Christ and the Decree: Christology and Predestination in Reformed Theology From Calvin to Perkins* (Durham, NC: The Labyrinth Press, 1986), 1-13; idem, *PRRD I*, 123-32.

dogma' by deductive procedure. An examination of Edwards's writings reveals no evidence for previous scholarship's argument that Reformed theology attempted to build a synthetic, deductive, and therefore irrefutable system of theology on the basis of the proposition of absolute divine decree. Rather, far from being excessively speculative in the modern sense of the term, the discussions made by Edwards concerning the decree are thoroughly based on the Scripture or derived from his exegesis of the Scripture. Throughout his life time, Edwards did not produce any formal commentary on the Bible. Nevertheless, one would easily find that his discussion of each doctrine in his writings, including God's decree, is thoroughly based on the testimonies of the Scriptures and the interpretation of them.

In addition to the Scripture, Edwards relies on the writings of the Church Fathers to defend his argument on the subject, particularly because Whitby argues that the absolute determination of a certain number of persons to life or death was not maintained before Augustine's time. For example, Edwards refers to Augustine's *Of the Good of Perseverance*. According to him, Augustine's quotations of the Fathers in this work clearly testifies that some of the Fathers who lived before Augustine, such as Cyprian, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Ambrose, taught the absolute determination of a certain number of person to life or death. Edwards criticizes Whitby because he does not take any notice of this proof and remain in silence.⁷⁰ Thus, Edwards insists that Whitby now has two options: he should either admit that this doctrine was held by others before Augustine or maintain that the Fathers such as Cyprian and Nazianzus did not live before Augustine's times.⁷¹ Accordingly, for Edwards, Whitby's claim is groundless and irrelevant.⁷²

⁷⁰ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 3. Edwards also states that "He [Whitby] neither objects against the assertion, nor cavils against the quotation... He does not here offer anything against it, or against the ancient and learned Father who deliver'd it." Ibid.

⁷¹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 3.

⁷² Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 2. Besides this, in order to support his claim, Edwards quotes the

3. The Object of God's Predestination: Supra or Infra?

Edwards presents a summary of the order and series of the decree for the clear understanding of the divine decree on spiritual matter of human beings:

- I. God decreed to create man in his own image, and thereby to make him capable of serving and obeying him.
- II. He decreed to bestow happiness on him and his whole race, if they continued in his image, and obeyed him; otherwise to punish him and them with eternal death.
- III. He decreed to permit them to sin and fall, and thereby to forfeit the divine grace, and to make themselves obnoxious to the foresaid punishment.
- IV. He looking upon all men thus fallen and sinful; decreed to manifest the glory of his mercy and justice in providing a saviour and redeemer for some of them, and not for the rest.
- V. Accordingly he was pleas'd to elect some certain persons out of the number of all mankind to partake of that. Redemption and salvation, and this out of his meer good-will and pleasure.
- VI. But he was pleased to reject others, and to decree to withhold his grace from them, and to doom them to eternal punishment for their sins.⁷³

Edwards here faithfully follows the infralapsarian view of the Reformed orthodox: God regarded the objects of election and reprobation as already created and fallen human beings rather than as not yet created one.

Edwards specifically opposes the Supralapsarian view of predestination.⁷⁴ He includes Reformed figures such as Calvin, Beza, Perkins, Gomarus, Voetius, Piscator, and Twiss in this category.⁷⁵ According to Edwards, they see human beings as “not created, or not fallen” on the grounds of Romans 9:21. However, he argues that “they

Church Father's interpretations of some biblical passages such as Romans 1:1 such as those of Augustine, Origen, Chrysostom, and Theophylact. Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 18-20. Edwards then adds that “Whitby ‘willfully omits and leaves out the expositions of these three on the first verse of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans which is very ominous, and foretells how partial he would be in his following annotations on the Epistle, especially when the doctrine of predestination is concern'd.’” Ibid., 21.

⁷³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, xvi-xvii.

⁷⁴ Edwards states that “But there are a rigid sort of men that maintain the contrary, and make the object of God's reprobation, man simply created, but not fallen, and defiled with any miscarriage. These have gain'd the name of Supralapsarians, because in setting forth the decree of reprobation they ascend above man's fall, and look upon him as reprobated before he fell: whereas those of the persuasion before describ'd, consider man as under or on this side the all; that is, as he is corrupted by sin.” Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 166.

⁷⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 166.

[vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath] were both of them consider'd by the divine decree, as in a corrupt and fallen state; for it is imply'd in the notion of mercy and wrath, that the objects of it are sinners and miserable.”⁷⁶ Thus, he argues as follows:

Now, there is no misery but what is occasion'd by sin, and consequently we may very rationally infer thence, that in the predestinating decree, God consider'd men as lapsed, and become sinners. This is the true posture of election. It is upon a prospect of the fall of man, it is upon a view of his being in a state of sin and misery. Consequently the eternal election had respect to Jesus Christ: and for his sake some were chosen from the rest to partake of grace and pardon through him.⁷⁷

IV. The Decree of Election: Absolute or Conditional?

In *Veritas Redux* and *Arminian Doctrine Condemn'd* where Edwards substantially deals with the doctrine of decree, his discussion of God's decree on mankind focuses mainly on two issues: (1) whether the divine election is absolute or conditional, and (2) whether God's decree imposes any force or absolute necessity on human freedom, especially on the matter of human salvation.

1. Absolute Nature of Predestination

Edwards first deals with the issue whether the decree of election is absolute or conditional. He summarizes his view as follows:

I. The decree of election is absolute in as much as 'tis founded wholly on God's free will and pleasure, and the foresight of the free and voluntary undertaking of Christ, and not on any thing that was fore-seen in man. II. The decree is absolute, in as much as 'tis fix'd and unchangeable. Yet, III. It is not so absolute, as to put a force upon any man. IV. It is not so absolute, but it may be said to have conditions belonging to it.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 74. He argues that “God shews his wrath and anger against none but sinners, and for nothing but sin.” Ibid.

⁷⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 75.

⁷⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 71.

For Edwards, the eternal election is absolute because “It was from God’s mere good will and pleasure, and the consideration of Christ’s merits, and no other original cause whatsoever.” He shows that this proposition is grounded on Scriptures such as Matthew 20:26 and Luke 12:32.⁷⁹ Edwards emphasizes that “It is of free mercy and grace, and without all respect or foresight of what any man wills or doth.”⁸⁰ Therefore, for him, the decree of divine election is absolute even though it includes conditions in it.

Edwards’ understanding of the absolute nature of divine decree of election is also well presented in his interpretation of 1 Timothy 1:9:

That is, God hath, in his eternal counsel, and most gracious purpose, chosen some to salvation, out of his mere goodness and mercy, without any consideration of works to be done, thus the impulsive cause of election is not to be found in anything out of God himself. We see that the Apostle resolves it into the divine will, good pleasure, purpose, counsel, and unmerited grace or favour. The fore-appointing of some to salvation, was the result of divine love and bounty, and that in Jesus Christ, the Son of God’s love.⁸¹

Indeed, for Edwards, the “true source and root” of God’s predestination is solely the free will and love of the Father, through his only begotten son.⁸² There is no other cause or motive except this. Edwards asserts that the earliest Christians, Augustine, even Arminius and Bellarmine (1542-1621) embraced this opinion.⁸³

2. Refutation of the Doctrine of Conditional Decree

Once he argues the absolute and immutable nature of the divine decrees of election, Edwards vehemently rejects the idea of conditional decrees of election. According to Edwards, Whitby insists that God predestined a certain number of persons

⁷⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 71.

⁸⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 72.

⁸¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 72.

⁸² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 76-77.

⁸³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 76-78.

on account of their faith and obedience.⁸⁴ To reiterate, for Whitby and his associates, the divine decision to save some and not others is ultimately conditioned by human choice. As with other Arminians, Whitby divides God's will in the decree into two parts: antecedent will (*voluntas antecedens*), and consequent will (*voluntas consequens*). Herein, one can clearly see that Whitby adopts a fully synergistic perspective with the human will preceding God's actual decision to elect any individual.⁸⁵

In opposition to Arminians, Edwards strongly claims that salvation is totally God's grace, and faith and obedience are the result of predestination. According to him, Whitby's understanding of predestination is a synergism inimical not only to the Reformed, Augustinian, and Pauline doctrine of predestination, but also to the fundamental teaching of the Reformation that salvation is by grace alone. In particular, Edwards claims that "If there were not an absolute, that is, an unalterable decree concerning the saving of men, the whole of man's salvation would be contingent, and it may be none would be saved, and then God would be frustrated of his end and design."⁸⁶ In this regard, Edwards is adamant in arguing against the Arminians' conditional character of predestination. For him, the eternal decree of God is not conditional; it is not consequent upon human choice.⁸⁷ Edwards tries to rebut the idea of a conditional decree mainly by the arguments concerning God's omniscience and immutable nature of decree.

(1) God's Omniscience and the Immutable Nature of Predestination

According to Edwards, divine perfection implies being omniscient. Thus, he affirms the omniscience of God as one of the indispensable attributes of the divine

⁸⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 79.

⁸⁵ Concerning this distinction in God's will, see, for example, Whitby, *Four Discourses*, 48.

⁸⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 92.

⁸⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 89.

nature.⁸⁸ Edwards particularly teaches that “Everything and person that was to be afterwards, was seen and known by him, as if it actually existed.”⁸⁹ Therefore, Edwards acknowledges that, by this foreknowledge, God foreknows who will be saved by faith in Christ. He, however, claims that faith and obedience are not any cause or motive of God’s election of some people to life and glory.⁹⁰ Concerning this, Edwards adds as follow:

... my reason is this, because God could not foresee any would believe, unless they were those unto whom he had decreed to give faith, for God’s foreknowledge depends upon his decree. He knew all futurities, because he had appointed them; that is, either to effect them, or permit them.⁹¹

Edwards here strongly insists that God foreknows who will be saved because God decreed to give grace to them first. Likewise, God foresees the future contingencies because He decreed them first:

Thus he foresaw that such and such persons would repent, because he had purpos’d to encline their hearts to repent: on the other hand he foresaw that others wou’d not repent, because he had from everlasting decreed not to encline their hearts to repentance. And as to all other things whatsoever, the decree preceeds precognition. God did not decree things because he foreknew them, but he foreknew them because he decreed them.⁹²

In sum, for Edwards, God’s foreknowledge is grounded in His decree. Therefore, Edwards strongly asserts that Arminians’ doctrine of conditional decree of election cannot be warranted at all.

Moreover, Edwards argues that the nature of the decree of election is “immovable and unchangeable.” He claims that, if the decree is changeable, it would impair the

⁸⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 81.

⁸⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 82.

⁹⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 82. The issue of divine foreknowledge and particularly that of middle knowledge will be discussed in detail in chapter 5.

⁹¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 82.

⁹² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 83.

omniscience of God, especially concerning the future events. Edwards explains that humanity does not have certain knowledge of what shall happen in the future because he cannot “dive into future events.” However this does not apply to God at all. God by including the salvation of mankind knows the future completely. Edwards, therefore, maintains that God’s decree of election is fixed and unalterable and this immutable nature of decree defies his opponents’ concept of conditional decree of God.⁹³

(2) Distinction of the Scope between Foreknowledge and Predestination

For Edwards, in addition to the matter of causal sequence between foreknowledge and the divine decree of election, the understanding of the distinction of the scope between them is also important in order to refute the idea that the election is grounded on the conditional foresight of future. He distinguishes the different scope of the objects between foreknowledge and predestination as follows: “by God’s foreknowing, we are to understand the divine decree in general, and by his predestinating is denoted here to us a particular and special act of the decree.”⁹⁴ Edwards elaborates this:

Fore-knowing is the general word, for the divine decree, and it is call’d so, because by it God foreknows all things; but predestinating is the particular term, and must be taken in a stricter sense. The former comprehends all God’s purpose and designation concerning all persons and things; all persons good and bad, all things whether relating to temporal or spiritual concerns, whether belonging to this or the future state. But the latter is of a much narrower compass, and respects only that gracious part of the divine decree, which in the sacred writings is stilled election.⁹⁵

This distinction is particularly critical for the right interpretation of Romans 8:29 because Edwards’ adversaries such as Roman Catholics, Socinians, and Remonstrants often use this verse to support their argument that faith and obedience are the cause of predestination. On the basis of these distinctions, however, Edwards exposes the verse as

⁹³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 89.

⁹⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 84.

⁹⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 85.

“The meaning then is, that God did not only foreknow, and in general pre-determine the state of all persons, but he more particularly, signally and especially decreed what should be the condition of the godly.”⁹⁶ He assigns further differences between them:

... that προγινωσχειν, to foreknow signifies the bare act of election, the taking and choosing out such particular persons from the rest of mankind: These God knows to be his, as set apart from others; but προεκειν, to predestinate, signifies the actual determining them to grace and glory, which is an higher acts. Tho’ these two are inseparable in the divine decree, yet we may consider them as distinct: we apprehend that God was pleas’d in his infinite goodness as well as sovereignty, first to choose out some from the whole body of mankind, and then to distinguish them further, by ordaining them to everlasting happiness. This I take to be the true account of this matter.⁹⁷

Consequently, Edwards asserts that faith and obedience cannot be the cause of the eternal election. Even though God foresees them, they are the result of God’s predestination. He once again states that the divine grace and mercy are “the only cause, spring and source” of predestination.⁹⁸ Edwards, therefore, claims that Romans 8:29 cannot be used against the Reformed doctrine of predestination.⁹⁹

3. Absolute Nature of Predestination and the Condition of Salvation

If divine election is not conditional but absolute in nature, does it deny the role of conditions for human salvation? This is the question Edwards deals with next to clarify the nature of divine decree of election. For him, the decree of election is not absolute in this sense that it includes no conditions in it. He defines conditions as follows:

Tho’ God freely chooses a determinate number of men to salvation, yet he decrees that there shall be certain conditions of their being sav’d. By conditions, I mean such qualifications, without none shall be sav’d as faith and good works and perseverance.

⁹⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 86.

⁹⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 86.

⁹⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 87.

⁹⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 87.

Or call them certain means in order to obtaining the end of election, namely salvation.¹⁰⁰

Edwards, however, strongly opposes the Remonstrants' view that there are conditions in the decree of God. According to him, "election and salvation are different things, and therefore there may be conditions of the one, tho' not of the other." That is to say, for Edwards, conditions are required in order to receive salvation and eternal life.¹⁰¹

Regarding this difference, he elaborates as follows:

There may be then an absolute decree, and yet conditions may be included in that decree; but it is an improper way of speaking to call the decree conditional. For tho' the conditions of salvation are compris'd in the decree of election, and are part of it, yet God doth not elect conditionally, and therefore the decree itself is not conditional. Yea, the conditions or means are decreed absolutely. Thus, faith and obedience are conditions of happiness, but it was absolutely decreed that they should be so, and that they should be in order to that end.¹⁰²

Therefore, Edwards maintains it is a gross mistake to assert that free grace is "utterly inconsistent with all conditions."¹⁰³ Rather, both the means and the ends of the decree of predestination show God's free grace and love:

God chose men to salvation without any consideration of faith and obedience, and consequently the election is of free grace and bounty, but the same divine decree appointed faith and obedience to be conditions or requisites of everlasting happiness. Therefore both the means and the end are of God's mere grace and love. The former are as free and gratuitously decreed by God as the latter.¹⁰⁴

Finally, Edwards once again affirms the absolute nature of the decree of election:

But this decree itself is absolute, and depends not on any conditions or terms, for it was from the mere good will and pleasure of God, and not upon fore-sight of any thing in man. Tho' God decrees the conditions on which men shall be sav'd, and decrees to save none without them, yet he absolutely decrees the salvation of men, and the conditions on which they shall be sav'd. God's decree then is not therefore

¹⁰⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 95.

¹⁰¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 95.

¹⁰² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 95.

¹⁰³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 95.

¹⁰⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 96.

conditional, because he decrees to save men upon conditions, for he absolutely will'd these as well as the other: and from eternity he absolutely decreed to give his elect a will and power to perform these conditions.¹⁰⁵

Indeed, Edwards distinguishes the difference between “a conditional decree” and “a decree that contains conditions in it.” For him, the Reformed doctrine of predestination is not of the former sort but of the latter.¹⁰⁶ Edwards thus claims that one should not confound decree and means. However, he teaches that “The end and the means, the decree and the precept must go together.”¹⁰⁷

Edwards finally confronts a certain criticism concerning the Reformed doctrine of election: the doctrine of absolute election makes human beings “presumptuous and lazy, and cramps all endeavours, and so at last renders the design of the gospel fruitless; and tends to the subversion of all religion.” In opposition to this charge, Edwards asserts that this is an absurd accusation because God made “the means or conditions subordinate to the absolute decree.”¹⁰⁸ Namely, it requires “the observance of certain conditions, which include in them a change of life and actual holiness.”¹⁰⁹

Edwards therefore argues that, unlike the criticism, Reformed doctrine of predestination is “an effectual antidote against pride, and an undue opinion of our own worth and ability.”¹¹⁰ He also maintains that it is “a powerful motive” to holy and obedient life. Edwards includes Ephesians 1:4 and Romans 8:29 to support his view.¹¹¹ In particular, he argues that Arminians deliberately ignore and oppose Romans 8:29 which

¹⁰⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 96.

¹⁰⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 96.

¹⁰⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 98.

¹⁰⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 98.

¹⁰⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 99.

¹¹⁰ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 131.

¹¹¹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 131. He also quotes the Thirty Ninth Article on predestination: “it is full of sweet, pleasant and unspeakable comfort to godly persons; that it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation, to be enjoyed through Christ; and that it doth fervently kindle their love to God.” *Ibid.*

testifies that God elected certain persons from eternity for the sake of their sanctification.¹¹²

In sum, Edwards does not deny the role of means such as faith and obedience. Consequently, it is certain that Edwards never taught a doctrine which emphasizes divine sovereignty to the exclusion of human responsibility. Rather, for him, God's eternal election and His effectual grace are "the great source of all personal righteousness and sanctity."¹¹³

4. Reprobation

(1) The Nature of Reprobation

Edwards' discussion of reprobation is relatively succinct. Having discussed the nature of divine election, he turns to the doctrine of reprobation. Edwards enumerates several denominations for this, such as "non-election, preterition, rejection, reprobation, the decree of damnation." He defines this as follows:

Reprobation or rejection, which denotes the eternal purpose of God to leave a certain number of men in their corrupt state and guilt, and to deny them his grace, whereby their understandings might be enlighten'd, and their wills enclin'd to good, and consequently to permit sin to be in the world.¹¹⁴

Edwards, however, argues that the reprobation can be further distinguished between the reprobating part and the condemnatory part.¹¹⁵ Thus, Edwards briefly summarizes the order of this decree as: "first to withhold special grace from some, and to leave them in their sins: and, secondly, to condemn and punish them for those sins."¹¹⁶

¹¹² Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 132.

¹¹³ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 132.

¹¹⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 101.

¹¹⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 100.

¹¹⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 100-01.

Edwards argues, particularly against Whitby who denies it, that the doctrine of damnation is firmly based on the Scriptures. As an example, he presents Proverbs 16:4 which speaks about the glory of God's justice in the punishment of sinners. Edwards claims that the interpretations of this text by the adversaries of the Reformed such as Whitby and Tillotson are not convincing because "all of them widely differing from, and contradicting one another, and perverting the very grammatical import of the words, merely to evade the plain force of the wise man's aphorism."¹¹⁷

Edwards also quotes 1 Peter 2:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:9 and Jude 1:4 to prove the decree of damnation, stating that "We must know that God delights in punishing of sinners, as well as rewarding the righteous: His acts of vindictive justice on offenders in the other world, are as pleasing to him as those of his mercy: and certainly then, they should not be displeasing to us."¹¹⁸

(2) Does the Doctrine of Reprobation Lead People to Despair?

In his discussion of the doctrine of reprobation, Edwards refutes his adversaries' criticism that Reformed doctrine of reprobation leads human beings to despair. He confutes it on several grounds. First of all, this accusation is absurd because the doctrine of reprobation brings no more terror and despair than adversaries of Reformed soteriology. Edwards asserts that, unless a person finds himself/herself to be a non-believer, there is no reason to be troubled by this doctrine. In other words, even though the decree is unconditional, one cannot possibly conclude that he/she is destined to the eternal misery as long as one does not find unbelief in Christ or no repentance of sin.¹¹⁹

Moreover, Edwards insists that no one can actually assure himself/herself as a reprobate whose name is not recorded in the book of life. Thus, the doctrine of

¹¹⁷ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 17.

¹¹⁸ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 17.

¹¹⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 233.

reprobation does not result in any ground for despair.¹²⁰ Edwards also maintains that, even if this doctrine causes some despair, it must be taught. If this would not be preached, it would lead people to “presumption” which is as dangerous as despair.¹²¹

Next, Edwards claims that his adversaries’ soteriology includes the cause of more terror and despair than that of the Reformed because they teach that their salvation is dependent on their free choice.¹²² He asserts that human will is unreliable because it is so precarious and perverted. Thus, free choice cannot be a sure and stable foundation for salvation. Instead, God’s election from eternity is “sure and steadfast.”¹²³ Furthermore, Edwards asserts that Arminian doctrine such as the uselessness of death bed repentance or possibility of no salvation of some who are persistent in sin is more awful and rigid than the Reformed doctrine of reprobation.¹²⁴

Lastly, Edwards claims that “the true way of receiving comfort is from the signs of grace and holiness in us.” That is to say, “the sincerity of our heart” and the obedient lives are “the best touch-stone of our spiritual and eternal state.” He states that if one does not find them in their life, he/she may be in a reprobate condition.¹²⁵

Consequently, Edwards asserts that the doctrine of reprobation is not more harsh or rigid than his adversaries’ doctrines. However, interestingly, he insists upon the possibility of exceptions in decree. Edwards claims that this exception might become “a door kept open for hope and relief.”¹²⁶

¹²⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 236.

¹²¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 234.

¹²² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 233.

¹²³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 234.

¹²⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 235.

¹²⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 236.

¹²⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 237.

5. Exceptions in the Divine Decree

In general, Reformed theology argues that God from eternity unalterably and immovably decreed to whom God is going to bestow his saving grace. Thus, it teaches that man's eternal condition is predetermined by the decrees of election and reprobation. As mentioned above, however, Edwards interestingly argues that there may be some exceptions regarding this doctrine:

I may have leave to add, that, as before he decree of temporal things, and particularly of man's life, I acknowledge, that there might be some exceptions, so here I am not backward to grant that there may be the like with respect to the salvation and damnation of persons; and so, by this means there is a door kept open for hope and relief.¹²⁷

More specifically, Edwards distinguishes "three ranks of persons." Concerning this, he states as follows:

First, those upon whom God hath from eternity purpos'd to bestow saving grace and eternal happiness. Secondly, there are those that are under the decree of reprobation, to whom God determin'd to deny saving grace, and to suffer them to perish because of their sins unrepented of. But besides these two ranks of persons, whose eternal condition is fix'd by the decrees of election and reprobation, There may perhaps be a third sort, who fall not under either of these decrees, but are in a state of probation, and are not definitely predestin'd to salvation or damnation.¹²⁸

Edwards supports the possibility of a three-fold state of humanity in divine decree by the fourfold argument. First, he claims that this hypothesis may help interpret some difficult passages of Scripture, which are not otherwise easily understood. He mentions Matthew 11:21-23 as an example. He discusses the meaning of the text in detail. And Edwards concludes that "tho' they are now damn'd, they might have been sav'd; which could not be, if an absolute decree has pass'd upon them." He also enumerates some biblical passages such as Daniel 4:27 and Joel 2:14 to support his claim. Edwards claims that

¹²⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 237.

¹²⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 237-38.

“these texts speak only of the mere possibility or probability of it, and of obtaining mercy and pardon.”¹²⁹

Second, Edwards insists that “This is according to the usual dispensation of heaven, which is not always alike, but is wont to vary sometimes.” According to him, God is pleased to order and administer things not in the same manner but in the diverse manner.¹³⁰ Likewise, quoting Ephesians 3:10, Edwards claims that God’s administration is various in his dealings with human beings.¹³¹ Third, he tries to find its ground from the sovereignty of God. Edwards asserts that the threefold state of human beings in decree is possible because God can do “what he will with his own” by His sovereign power and will.¹³² Fourth, Edwards relies on God’s mercifulness to support his view. He argues that this distinction is most agreeable to the mercifulness of God that we understand. Edwards states that “If the fix’d and unalterable decree be thought to be too grievous and severe, this may serve as a counterpoise to it: this may be useful to mitigate the severity of the other doctrine.”¹³³

On the basis of these arguments, Edwards argues that, even though God has decreed from eternity the everlasting state of mankind, it is likely that there is “a reserve, and an exception as to some.” He continues to state that some particular instances may exist which are exceptional to God-given “great general rule and law.”¹³⁴ Edwards leads to this, at last, that “It is probable that there is no necessity of restraining the divine decree to every individual person.”¹³⁵

¹²⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 241.

¹³⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 242.

¹³¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 243.

¹³² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 244.

¹³³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 244.

¹³⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 241.

¹³⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 245.

Edwards, however, still admits that the Bible generally teaches the universal, immovable, and unalterable nature of decree.¹³⁶ Thus, he does not strenuously insist on his idea of exceptions in the decree:

With submission I offer this to be consider'd, for it would be great arrogancy to be positive here; it would be unpardonable presumption to determine peremptorily, and therefore I only propound it as a probable interpretation of our saviour's words, and refer myself to the censure of the judicious.¹³⁷

Nevertheless, Edwards asserts that “There is scarcely such a general proposition to be met with as hath no exceptions at all. And we say, and truly, that an exception confirms the rule.”¹³⁸ In short, for Edwards, it is “reasonable” to think that there is an exception in the decree of God.¹³⁹

V. Divine Decree and Human Freedom

As already mentioned in Edwards' discussion of the decree of God, it was another important issue whether God's decree inflicts any force or absolute necessity on human freedom, especially on the matter of human salvation. This issue is particularly significant for the study because it directly confronts previous scholarship's evaluation of the Reformed position on the relation between divine necessity and human freedom.

Edwards teaches both the absolute nature of God's decree and the reality of human freedom. The question can be asked as to how both parts of this position relate in a coherent way. His defense of both God's absolute decree and human free choice is clearly discussed in his writings such as *Veritas Redux* and *Arminian Doctrine Condemn'd*. In these works against his opponents such as Whitby who condemned Reformed doctrine of decree as fatal necessity, Edwards tries to refute the adversaries'

¹³⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 245.

¹³⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 240.

¹³⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 245.

¹³⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 246.

charge mainly through the traditional scholastic approaches such as the distinction between the necessity of infallibility and coercion, and the distinction between the first and the second causes.

1. Distinction between the Necessity of the infallibility and Coercion

In order to understand the relation between the divine decree and human freedom in Edwards' thought, one, first of all, needs to examine his discussion of "the nature of the different classes, or kinds of agents."¹⁴⁰ He supposes that God is the first cause and all the other is the second cause. On this supposition, Edwards distinguishes the latter into four different causes. First, Edwards teaches that there are some causes which are necessary "by their very natures." They are agents such as fire which heats and burns, and heavy ones which descend. Edwards quotes Genesis 8: 22 to support this distinction.¹⁴¹ He teaches that these causes necessarily possess "their perpetual course." In other words, Edwards maintains that "the general agency of causes which produce these effects, is the same, and naturally unvariable, yet so as there is sometimes a variation, but his is extraordinary, and doth not null the universality of these effects."¹⁴²

Second, Edwards claims that some are "contingent causes and effects." He uses some examples such as man's falling from a horse by which he is killed or wounded in order to explain the concept of contingent causes and effects. However, Edwards states that, even though those are "casual or contingent" from a human perspective, "even this contingency or fortuitousness is of God's appointment." He enumerates biblical passages which fit this case such as Exodus 21:13, Deuteronomy 19:5, and 1 Kings 28:34.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 264.

¹⁴¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 264.

¹⁴² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 265.

¹⁴³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 265.

Third, Edwards teaches that there are “sensible and spontaneous agents.”

According to him, brutes especially belong to this class. God appointed them to live according to a particular nature and manner of acting. Thus, they are distinguished from other causes.¹⁴⁴ Finally, without detailed explanation, Edwards introduces “intellectual and voluntary causes and effects.” According to him, human persons and their actions belong to this classification.¹⁴⁵

Edwards insists that God distinguishes the several groups of causes and assigns “the different way and manner” to their beings. Each agent, therefore, acts according to its “different nature of beings.” He, however, argues that it is God’s decree or the will of God that appointed them to have such natures. In other words, God decreed “how the several causes shall act, whether necessarily, casually, spontaneously, or voluntarily.”¹⁴⁶ Concerning this, Edwards states as follows:

So that God’s decree is the cause of their necessity, contingency, spontaneity, and freedom. All these different qualities which are in second causes or effects, are derived from the will of God, who appointed them to be of that nature. It is he that fits necessary causes to necessary effects, and contingent ones to those that are contingent, and so on. Whatever comes to pass necessarily, so comes to pass by virtue of the divine decrees; and whatever happens contingently, and etc. so happens because of the same decree. The second causes do always retain their own particular nature and property, and their effects accordingly are necessary or casual, or proceed from mere sense or spontaneous motion, or from reason and will: But the first cause is immutable, and with respect to his foreknowledge and decree all effects and events are immutable, necessary, fix’d and stable, and cannot be otherwise.¹⁴⁷

Indeed, for Edwards, the different natures of secondary causes do not stand on their own. They depend on God’s decree and the mode of their existence is established by God’s decree. That is, God decreed that contingent things occur contingently and necessary

¹⁴⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 265.

¹⁴⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 265.

¹⁴⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 265.

¹⁴⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 265-66.

things occur necessarily. Similar arguments are found in other Reformed writings. For example *the Westminster Confession of Faith* states as follows:

I. God from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.¹⁴⁸

II. Although, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably, and infallibly; yet, by the same providence, He orders them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.¹⁴⁹

In a similar vein, Turretin argues that divine decree “so determines the futurity of the event as not to change the nature of things, but permits necessary things to act necessarily, free things freely.”¹⁵⁰ He elaborates this as follows:

The principal foundation of the divine knowledge about future contingent thing is ... the decree alone by which things pass from a state of possibility to a state of futurity (in which he sees them as it were determined and certainly future); and because the decree of God is not occupied about the thing, but also about the mode of the thing (i.e., that the thing may take place according to the nature of its cause, necessarily if necessary, freely if free, God sees them in the decree not only as certainly future, but also as certainly future contingently.¹⁵¹

For Voetius, God’s decree establishes “the mode of contingency in contingent causes and effects, that of necessity in necessary causes and effects...”¹⁵² William Twisse also asserts that what God decided to take place contingently occurs contingently:

For even those things which God decided to come to passe contingently as the actions of man, must necessarily by the vertue of Gods decision come to passe, in

¹⁴⁸ *The Confession of Faith, The Larger and Shorter Catechisms, with the Scripture Proof at Large*. (Philadelphia: 1745), 36.

¹⁴⁹ *The Confession of Faith*, 44-45.

¹⁵⁰ Turretin, *Institutes I*, IV.IV.VI (321). “... quod ita determinat futurity eventus, ut rerum naturam non mutet, sed res necessaries necessario, liberas libere agree sinat.” Idem, *Institutio I*, IV.IV.VI (287).

¹⁵¹ Turretin, *Institutes I*, III.XII.XVIII.

¹⁵² “... ita et modus ejusdem, contingentiae scilicet in causis et effectibus contingentibus, necessitatis in causis et effectibus necessariis...” Voetius, *De termino vitae*, 104.

such a manner as joyned with a possibilitie of not comming to passe, otherwise it were impossible they should come to passe contingently.¹⁵³

He also states as follows:

... as he decreeth that necessary things shall come to pass necessarily, so he decreeth that contingent things shall come to pass contingently.¹⁵⁴

Synopsis purioris theologiae presents a similar argument in its explanation of human freedom in God's providence:

Therefore, it is so much absent that the operation of divine providence demolishes the liberty of the will of the creature, as it is not able to entirely exist without that. Because not only any action of the creature but also the mode of such action depends on the efficacy of the divine will; it follows that the liberty of human acts is not destroyed but established by the providence of God. That should be said even about the contingency of the thing in general. Indeed divine providence does not corrupt nature but perfect; does not remove but uphold; and all thing which He created, in this way He administers, as He allows them to exercise and act in their own proper movements.¹⁵⁵

Benedict Pictet also argues that God decreed not only the event itself but also the mode of it as follows:

From this immutability of the decree, it does not follow that God decreed anything in such a way that its effect would be obtained by lot, but this immutability does not remove the liberty of the creatures. Indeed it is difficult to grasp how this infallible event can exist with the liberty of human beings. Truly nothing is certain than 1. Nothing that would not be decreed occurs. 2. We all act freely and it is enough to know two. This should so much observed that the same decree which decreed the future of the thing established the mode by which the thing of future exist, so that all

¹⁵³ William Twisse, *A Discovery of D. Iacksons vanitie or A perspective Glasse, whereby the admirers of D. Iacksons profound discourses may see the vanitie and weaknesse of them, in sundry passages, and especially so farre as they tende to the undermining of the doctrine hitherto received* (London: W. Jones, 1631), 274.

¹⁵⁴ Twisse, *Discovery*, 338. cf. Turretin, *Institutes*, III.XIV.XXI.

¹⁵⁵ "Tantum igitur abest, ut operatio divinae providentiae destruat libertatem voluntatis creatae, ut haec absque illa prorsus consistere nequeat. Nam cum ab efficacia voluntatis divinae, pendeat non solum actio quaelibet creaturae, sed etiam actionis ipsius modus; consequens est, per Dei providentiam non destrui, sed statui, humanourm actuum libertatem. Quod etiam de contingentia rerum in genere, dicendum est. Divina enim providentia non corrumpit naturam, sed perficit; non tollit, sed tuetur; Et omnia quae creavit, sic administrat, ut ipsa suos etiam exercere et agere proprios motus sinat, August. de Civit. Dei, Lib. 7, c. 30." *Synopsis purioris theologiae*, XI.XI.

creatures act suitably to their own nature; inanimate creature with physical necessity; truly rational and free creatures both with reason and with freedom.¹⁵⁶

As with Edwards, we see from these arguments that the divine decree does not destroy the existence or the freedom of the second causes. Rather, according to Edwards, *The Westminster Confession*, and other Reformed scholastics, the divine decree is the foundation of freedom and contingency of the secondary causes. In sum, for them, God's decree ensures the contingent nature of secondary causes.¹⁵⁷

For Edwards, a special instance of the secondary causality is human free choice. Thus, he further elaborates the relation between the decree of God and human beings as rational or intelligent causes. He argues that, in spite of God's decree, human free actions are not causally determined by God:

They all happen and are according to the decree, but they are not caus'd by it, and therefore rational agents may act freely notwithstanding the preordination of God. For the decree doth not so affect the actions of men, as to lay any force upon the actors. It is not denied that there is a necessity of the certain futurition of the acts and events, so that they shall infallibly and inevitably come to pass; but there is not on the things themselves or the actors a necessity, whereby the persons are forc'd to do what they do, and to do it unwillingly.¹⁵⁸

In his refutation of Whitby in *Arminian Doctrine Condemn'd*, Edwards similarly argues as follows:

For he tediously insists upon this that the fixing of a certain time, and other circumstances, makes all actions necessary, and therefore void of choice and all willingness; when as every one of ordinary capacity knows how to make a difference between necessity, as it signifies the certainty of the event, and necessity, as it

¹⁵⁶ "XIII. Ex hac Immutabilitate decretorum sequitur nihil Deum decrevisse, quod non suum effectum sortiatur, sed haec immutabilitas non tollit libertatem creaturaum. Equidem difficile est capere quomodo haec infallibilitas eventus possit consistere cum libertate hominis. Verum nihil certius, quam 1. Nihil evenire auod decretum non sit. 2. Nos omnes agree libere, et haec duo nosse satis est. Hoc tantum observandum, idem decretum quod futures res decrevit, statuisset etiam modum quo res futurae sunt, ita ut omnes creaturae agant convenienter naturae suae; creaturae inanimatae, physica necessitate; creaturae vero rationales et liberae cum ratione et cum libertate." Benedicti Picteti, *Theologia Christiana* (London: 1820), III. I. XIII.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics: Setout and Illustrated From the Sources*, ed. Ernst Bizer, trans. G. T. Thomson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 143-45.

¹⁵⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 266.

imports coercion and force. The divine decree renders men's action necessary in the former respect, because the actions will certainly and infallibly be done; but not in the latter, for there is force and compulsion on the will, so as to violate the freedom of it.¹⁵⁹

Edwards here evidently makes a distinction between necessity of infallibility and necessity of coercion.¹⁶⁰ According to him, the latter lays force or coercion upon human actions. However, the former, which means future acts and events decreed shall certainly be accomplished, destroys neither the contingency of some event nor the freedom of mankind.¹⁶¹ Thus, Edwards claims that even though the latter cannot stand together with human freedom, the former can be compatible with it. On the basis of this distinction, he strongly asserts that since it brings about necessity of infallibility, the determination of divine decree does not inflict any force or coercion upon human beings.

Edwards illustrates this argument by using Christ's death as an example.¹⁶² Christ's death was "necessary and unavoidable" because it was absolutely decreed. No coercion, nevertheless, was laid upon the will of Christ. Instead, Christ gave up his life

¹⁵⁹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 204.

¹⁶⁰ Reformed scholastics generally employed the famous scholastic term, necessity of consequence (*necessitas consequentiae*) and that of consequent (*necessitas consequentis*). In his writings, however, Edwards prefers as a solution terminological distinction between necessity of infallibility (*necessitas infallibilitatis*) and that of coercion (*necessitas coactionis*). He also sometimes calls the former as the certainty (necessity) of the event and the latter as the necessity of restraint, compulsion or force. This feature is also found in Vermigli's writings. For example, he states that "Verum nos ad maiorem perspicuitatem addimus aliam distinctionem, quondam esse necessitatem certitudinis vel infallibilitatis, aliam vero coactionis." Vermigli, *Loci Communes*, 469.

¹⁶¹ In necessity of infallibility, hypothetical necessity, or necessity of consequence, the necessity applies to the implication or consequence (*consequentia*) between two states of affairs. In other words, the necessity determines the whole of the consequence between them. Thus, whereas the relation of implication itself is necessary, two states of affairs are not necessary but contingent in this formula. On the contrary, in necessity of coercion, absolute necessity, or necessity of consequent, the necessity is placed before the consequent (*consequentis*) of the implication and determines the consequent state of affair. That is, the result of the conditional proposition is necessary and this formula consequently results in absolute necessity. Concerning the detailed logical analysis of these modal categories, see Van Asselt, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 35-39.

¹⁶² Edwards' attempt to prove his argument is not confined to the testimonies of the Scriptures. In order to support it, Edwards also relies on arguments of some famous ancient thinkers such as Maximus Tyrius, Epictetus (55-135), Seneca, and Josephus (37-100). According to Edwards, even though they were the Gentiles, they all insisted that the divine necessity and human freedom can be reconciled. Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 270-71.

and died willingly and freely. Otherwise, Christ's death was no use at all for human beings. Likewise, Acts 4:27-28 testify that particular persons such as Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were predetermined in what they did for Christ. They, however, all acted voluntarily without any force. Even Judas' betrayal was decreed as said in Luke 22: 22, and so he could not but betray Christ. Nevertheless, Judas betrayed Christ willingly with no compulsion and force.¹⁶³ For Edwards, this certainly shows that "mens actions are free and voluntary, though they were fix'd from eternity by an irresistible decree."¹⁶⁴

Consequently, for Edwards, the effect of the decree of God is not limited to the actuality of human actions. Instead, "not only every man's actions, but the manner of them" falls under the divine decree.¹⁶⁵ Regarding this, Edwards highlights as follows:

He that hath decreed they shall act, hath also decreed they shall act freely and voluntarily, and not by force and coercion. Therefore the divine decree doth not hinder the liberty of their wills, because God determin'd that their wills should be free. This gives us an account of the present query, how free-will and the decrees are consistent? We see they are very reconcilable, because God hath so decreed mens actions from eternity that thereby there is no violence offer'd to the will of man. For though nothing can fall out to contradict the decree, yet the decree itself establishes liberty in human actions, God having appointed that man should act with free-will and choice.¹⁶⁶

As already indicated briefly in his discussion of the relation between the divine decree and the second causes in general, this statement indicates that divine decree does not destroy human freedom in Edwards' thought. Rather, it establishes contingency and freedom of human actions. In other words, the divine decree of human beings' contingent acts establishes them as contingents with certainty. Therefore, according to him, divine

¹⁶³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 269-70.

¹⁶⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 270.

¹⁶⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 267.

¹⁶⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 267. Edwards also remarks that "man's acting freely was predetermin'd as well as the acting itself." Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 269.

determination does not alter the modal nature of things, but only their futurity or future actuality. Regarding this, Edwards remarks as follows:

The futurity of them (as I have before said) is necessary, but the actions themselves are not so. And the reason is this, because they proceed from free causes and agents, that is, men, and because they were freely decreed and predetermined by God. Thus the decree and the free actings of men are consistent.¹⁶⁷

In this regard, for Edwards, it is absurd to conclude that divine preordination forces people to act in the way it was predetermined.¹⁶⁸

Here, for the better understanding of Edwards' view of the relation between divine decree and human freedom, especially as a continuing expression of the Reformed tradition, it will be helpful to examine the ideas of several other Reformed divines such as Vermigli, Voetius, and Turretin. As with the case of Edwards, scholastic distinction of the different necessities is commonly used by other Reformed thinkers as well. For example, in order to solve the difficulties that arise on the problem of the relation between divine necessity and human freedom, Vermigli distinguishes between necessity of certainty or infallibility (*necessitas certitudinis* or *infallibilitatis*) and that of compulsion or coercion (*necessitas coactionis*).¹⁶⁹ Like Edwards, he claims that the action in the latter case derives from violent, external coercion, and therefore no room is left for any kind of freedom. In contrast, the will of the agent in the former is not compelled from the outside to act in a certain way. Therefore, the necessity of certainty or infallibility neither excludes the proximate cause of an action nor imposes any external coercion. Rather, even though God infallibly foreknows how the agents act in a specific situation, their actions still depend on their will as its proximate cause. In a determinate

¹⁶⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 267.

¹⁶⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 267.

¹⁶⁹ Vermigli, *Loci Communes*, 469: "Verum nos ad maiorem perspicuitatem addimus aliam distinctionem, quondam esse necessitatem certitudinis vel infallibilitatis, aliam vero coactionis."

situation, consequently, the agent would spontaneously do the action which God has foreseen he or she will do.¹⁷⁰ Concerning this, Vermigli states as follows:

There be some which commonlie saie, that doubtless these distinctions helpe us nothing at all; if God have knowen before hand of things, those shall in anie wise come to passé. Yes verelie, they are profitable unto us, and that not meanlie: for because thereby we understand, that mans will is not compelled; but willinglie and without compulsion it desireth whatsoever it will.¹⁷¹

For Vermigli, the necessity of certainty or infallibility, therefore, can be compatible with human freedom or contingency.

William Perkins also employs traditional scholastic terminology, the necessity of consequence, to explain the compatibility of human freedom and divine necessity:

Thirdly, there is a necessitie of infallibilitie, or of consequence, when something follows necessary upon a supposed antecedent, as namely, upon the determination and decree of God. This necessitie and freedom of will, may both stand together. For in the doing of a voluntary action, it is sufficient that it proceed of judgment, and have his beginning from within the will, though otherwise, in respect of Gods will, it be of unchangeable necessitie. The certaintie of Gods decree, doth not abolish the consent of mans will, but rather order it, and midely incline, or draw it forth. And the thing that is directly contrary to freedome of will, is compulsion: because it aboslisheth consent.¹⁷²

Burman similarly claims that God's decree does not destroy human freedom. He writes as follows:

Moreover, because it could be coerced in no way, as long as chosen acts, free choice consists in this liberty from coercion. X. Moreover God's decrees and efficacious grace does not oppose free choice, from one perspective necessity of dependence, or infallibilities or determination, in respect to God. Since whatever comes forth by God assumes liberty rather, every order in creature and every completion depends only on decrees and will of God; unless He himself exists as the most free one of doing, who freely establishes and rules this order of thing and cause, nothing of

¹⁷⁰ Vermigli, *Loci Communes*, 172.

¹⁷¹ Vermigli, *Common Places*, 279. "Dictitant nonnulli: Hae distinctiones certe nos nihil iuvant, si quae Deus praescivit, omni nino sunt eventura: Imo prosunt non mediocriter, quia hinc intelligimus humanam voluntatem mini me cogi, sed sponte ac ultra, quicquid voluerit expetere." Vermigli, *Loci Communes*, 172.

¹⁷² William Perkins, *The Works of ... Mr. William Perkins*. 3 vols (Cambridge: John Legatt, 1612-1619), 723,

freedom indeed exists in creature, but all things are drawn to the same necessity. Even grace or special determination does not diminish the least part of liberty because these two stands together the best as witness in Scriptures.¹⁷³

Like Vermigli, Perkins and Burman here affirm that the decree of God does not impose any compulsion or force on human actions. By using the necessity of consequence or infallibility, they argue that human beings shall act freely and voluntarily in spite of God's decree.

In a similar vein to Vermigli, Perkins, and Burman, Turretin argues that divine decree does not impose any force on mankind. Rather, it brings a certainty of an event and human beings voluntarily do their action according to their nature:

The question does not concern absolute and physical necessity with respect to second causes in themselves (because we confess that some are necessary, others contingent), but with respect to God and in order to him. The question does not concern the necessity of coercion because the decree brings no violence to second causes, but decrees the futurity of things to take place agreeably to their nature. Rather the question concerns hypothetical and consequential necessity with respect to the certainty of the event and the futurity from the decree. We assert the latter.... They [all things] must happen necessarily, if not as to the mode of production (which is often contingent), still as to the certainty of the event (which cannot be otherwise).¹⁷⁴

Finally, Voetius provides his explanation of the issue through the more delicate distinction of the meanings of necessity. According to him, there are four different kinds of necessity: coercive necessity, necessity of nature, necessity of "definition or consequent (*definitionis seu consequentis*), and necessity on a certain presupposition

¹⁷³ "Cum autem voluntas nullo modo cogi possit, quoad actus elicitos, in libertate hac a coactione arbitrii libertas proprie consistit. X. Non autem repugnat ei, ab una parte necessitas dependentia, aut infallibilitatis, aut determinationis, respectu Dei, decretorumque ac ac efficaciae gratiae ejus. cum quaecunque a Deo proveniunt libertatem potius ponant, quum omnis in creaturis ordo, omnisque perfectio, a Dei decretis ac voluntate unice pendeat; qui nisi ipse foret liberrimum agens, qui liberrime hunc rerum ac causarum ordinem instituit & regit, nihil etiam in creaturis liberum foret, sed omnia eadem necessitate traherentur. Neque etiam gratia aut specialis ejus determinatio, vel minime libertatis partem delibat, cum haec duo optime consistant, Scriptura testis." Burman, *Synopsis theologiae*, 465,

¹⁷⁴ Turretin, *Institutes I*, IV.IV.III (320). "Non quaeritur de Necessitate absoluta et physica, respectu causarum secundarum in se, quia fatemur alias esse necessarias, alias contingentes; Sed respectu Dei et in ordine ad ipsum. Non de necessitate coactionis, quia decretum nullam vim infert causis secundis, sed futuritatem rerum decrevit fieri convenienter naturae ipsarum; Sed quaeritur de necessitate hypothetica et consequentiae, respectu certitudinis eventus et futuritatis ex decreto; quam asserimus." Idem, *Institutio I*, IV.IV.III (287).

(*Secundum quid, consequentiae seu ex hypothesi*).¹⁷⁵ On the basis of this distinction, Voetius argues that human actions should be regarded as necessary not in themselves but in the sense of the fourth kind of necessity: a necessity of infallibility. Therefore, for him, the events that God infallibly foreknows occur not by absolute necessity but by hypothetical necessity:

From another direction however such necessity with contingency and liberty can best conspire into one subject, for example, one and the same thing can be both necessary and contingent but from different respects. Concerning its own antecedent it is necessary not by absolute, intrinsic necessity but by mere hypothetical, extrinsic and respective; Concerning particular and proximate cause in its own nature it is contingent and in this way it should be called simply, absolutely, and properly free and undetermined.¹⁷⁶

In this way, by means of a necessity of infallibility or hypothetical necessity of consequence, Voetius defends not only God's ultimate determination of every event in the world but also its simultaneous contingent nature.

Consequently, the comparison between Edwards and other Reformed writers, such as Vermigli, Perkins, Burman, Turretin and Voetius, shows that they all rely on the scholastic distinction in order to explain the relation between necessity and human freedom, and argue that divine decree imposes the necessity of certainty or infallibility but not that of compulsion or coercion. According to them, the notion of the necessity of certainty or infallibility indicates that human action is free from the necessity of compulsion even though it is immutably predestined and foreknown by God. In other words, by means of the scholastic distinction, they could show how the realization of the

¹⁷⁵ According to Voetius, coercive necessity or necessity of nature is necessity by which "every natural cause is determined to one effect (*causa quaeque naturalis determinate est ad unum effectum*).¹⁷⁵ Necessity of definition or consequent occurs when "a predicate belongs by definition to subject or vice versa (*quando praedicatum est de definitione subjecti aut vice versa*)," so that, "when it is denied, contradiction is implied (*qua negata implicatur contradiction*).¹⁷⁶ Voetius, *De termino vitae*, 105-106.

¹⁷⁶ "Alio autem talem necessitatem cum contingentia & libertate optime conspirare in uno subjecto, h. e. unam eandemque rem posse esse & necessariam & contingentem sed diverso respectu. Relata enim ad antecedens suum est necessaria necessitate non absoluta, intrinseca sed mere hypothetica, extrinseca & respectiva; relata ad causam particularem & proximam sua natura liberam & indeterminatam est contingens, & sic simpliciter, absolute & proprie debet dici." Voetius, *De termino vitae*, 106.

decree is brought about in a contingent way that fully respects the particular nature of every created being, the human will included.

2. Human Beings' Freedom as a Secondary Cause

Edwards' scholastic distinction between God as the first cause and human beings as the second cause is also critical for the understanding of his view of the relation between divine decree and human freedom. Edwards points out that the will of mankind does not have absolute freedom. Instead, human will is always dependent on God.¹⁷⁷ That is to say, it "owes its being and operation to the divine influx." Edwards teaches that "God only, the uncreated and absolute cause, hath absolutely and simply free-will, and we who are dependent and subordinate cause act by his influence."¹⁷⁸ Thus, he insists as follows:

So that the will of man is limited, and is subordinate to God's will; therefore its freedom is no other than a secondary freedom, and holding from God. The will hath no primary and absolute dominion over itself and its actions, because we are creatures, and dependent beings.¹⁷⁹

Indeed, for Edwards, the nature of mankind, including the will, is secondary, dependent, and subordinate to God. He claims that the contrary insistence destroys "the nature of a creature."¹⁸⁰

On the ground of this different nature between God and human persons, in order to show that the divine decree does not destroy any possibility of contingencies, Edwards distinguishes between the first cause (*causa prima*) and the secondary one (*causa secunda*). According to him, the first cause (God's decree) does not exclude secondary

¹⁷⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 267.

¹⁷⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 268. Edwards also says that "Therefore no man is absolute master of his actions, and particularly of those of his will, because he is at the command of an higher power." Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 268.

¹⁸⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 268.

causes (human will). Instead, in His governing all human actions in the world, God preserves the nature of mankind and leads them accordingly. In other words, necessity applies only to the ultimate and first cause, not the proximate or secondary cause:¹⁸¹

These two [the first cause and the secondary cause] do well agree, because the latter is dependent upon, and subordinate to the former. The freedom of the will is its acting from an internal free principle, and it is God that gives this principle, and upholds it; therefore we need not fear that the freedom of the will should be taken away by God's decree, or be hurt and diminish'd by it. God is the cause of the will's moving and acting, and yet the will moves and acts freely, because he inclines it in a free and kindly manner.¹⁸²

He adds as follows:

It is manifest that though God from all eternity did by his immutable counsel preordain whatsoever in time should come to pass, yet hereby no violence is offer'd to the wills of men, and to the actions that proceed from them.¹⁸³

These statements show that, for Edwards, God's foreknowledge, providence and predestination do not overthrow the nature of human will as the secondary cause. He therefore acknowledges the existence of contingency with respect to second causes.

Edwards asserts as follows:

... in respect of second causes there is such a thing as chance in many events, but in respect of God, the first cause, there is no such thing. As to us, who are short-sighted creatures, and ignorant of the causes of things, there are divers occurrences that are fortuitous and contingent; but there is not the least thing that is so in regard of him that knows all things and determines all things. ... it cannot be said to be by chance, for he determin'd and appointed it.¹⁸⁴

Consequently, for Edwards, free choice exists on the level of secondary causes and is not destroyed by immutable necessity on the level of the first cause. Rather, one and the same thing can be both contingent and necessary: contingent in its secondary cause and

¹⁸¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 268.

¹⁸² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 268.

¹⁸³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 269.

¹⁸⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 43. He also states that "because though mens actions are indifferent and contingent in some respect ... yet in respect of God, they cannot be said to be contingent or casual... yea, all futurities are fix'd and certain as to him, because of his decree."

necessary seen from God's eternal decree and immutable providence. Thus, Edwards' distinction between the decree of God as the first cause and human freedom as the secondary cause leads him not only to attribute nothing to mere chance but also to distinguish his position from metaphysical determinism or fatalism.

It will be also helpful here to compare Edwards with other Reformed orthodox writers' ideas because it would highlight Edwards' understanding of the subject and show how Edwards stands as a continuing expression of the Reformed tradition. Like the case of the distinction of different necessity, the attempt to solve the problem between divine necessity and human freedom through the distinction of the first and second cause was common among the 16th and 17th century Reformed thinkers. For instance, Vermigli appeals to multiple layers of causality to show that the divine decree does not destroy human freedom. As with Edwards, Vermigli distinguishes between God as the first cause and mankind as the secondary one.¹⁸⁵ According to him, in spite of God's decree, human freedom is still preserved because necessity does not apply to the proximate or secondary cause.¹⁸⁶

Here we must remark that all things are necessary insofar as they are done and decreed in relation to the decision and purpose of God, but for God himself, who appoints and decides the act, all things are contingent, nothing in the world being of such necessity that it may not be otherwise.¹⁸⁷

He also argues as follows:

The nature of the thing itself was contingent, but when determined by God it became necessary.... It must be concluded that, as we have often said, all things

¹⁸⁵ Vermigli, "Providence," in *Philosophical Works: On Relation of Philosophy to Theology*, edited and translated by Joseph C. McLelland, *The Peter Martyr Library*, vol. 4. (Kirkville: Truman State University Press, 1996), 191. Vermigli also uses the distinction between inward and outward causes. Cf. *Ibid.*, 194.

¹⁸⁶ Vermigli, "Providence," 189; 194, *idem*, *Predestination and Justification: Two Theological Loci*, translated and edited with introduction and notes by Frank A. James III. *The Peter Martyr Library*, vol. 8 (Kirkville: Truman State University Press, 2003), 81. These two loci are originally gathered from Vermigli's commentary on Romans 9 and 11, respectively.

¹⁸⁷ Vermigli, "Providence," 182.

are necessary in relation to the providence of God, while in their own nature they are contingent.¹⁸⁸

For Vermigli, therefore, one has to view things on two different levels to understand the relation between divine decree and human contingency.¹⁸⁹

Moreover, according to Vermigli, the contingent character of one's actions is granted by the nature of its proximate cause.¹⁹⁰ Actions caused by human will are contingent because the human will is a contingent secondary cause. He teaches that God, who is indeed still regarded as the ultimate cause of human actions, realizes his plan by means of innumerable secondary causes, among which also human wills have a place. However, when God uses these secondary causes, He does not do any violence to them. Rather, God inclines the secondary causes to the end He intends to accomplish.¹⁹¹ Thus, human beings would do something that God decreed neither unwillingly, nor with a constrained mind but willingly.¹⁹² Concerning the way God works through human contingent acts, Vermigli states that "God draws all things together, but moves in such a way as to disturb nothing. Likewise, things may in their own nature incline equally to both sides, yet God bends them more to one."¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸ Vermigli, "Providence," 195.

¹⁸⁹ Vermigli, "Providence," 181-82. However, Vermigli claims that even though human actions can be considered as both contingent and necessary, their most proper predicate is that of contingency: "Cum res partim necessariae dici possint, partim etiam contingentes aut liberae, quemadmodum est declaratum, utra conditio magis eis convenit? Respondeo, illam convenire magis quae naturalis est et intrinseca. Quocirca quoniam necessitas de qua nunc agimus, exterius provenit, et tantum est ex hypothesi, ideo haudquaquam secundum illam res sunt iudicandae, sed secundum illa principia, quae a nobis intelliguntur: et ita opera nostra, quae a voluntate profiscuntur, libera statuentur." Vermigli, *Loci Communes*, 469. Therefore, for Vermigli, our actions must be judged according their internal principle, our will. Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Vermigli, "Providence," 194; idem, *Predestination*, 81.

¹⁹¹ Vermigli, "Providence," 193.

¹⁹² Vermigli, *Loci Communes*, 172.

¹⁹³ Vermigli, "Providence," 193. He also states that "Veruntamen ista voluntas qua Deus efficit omnia in omnibus, sese accomodat rerum naturis. Nam in cibo alit, in sole illustrat, in vite vinum producit, et in voluntate hominum efficit, ut sponte ac libere velint quae volunt." Vermigli, *Loci Communes*, 473; "Trahit enim Deus quidem res omnes, sed ita quoadammodo cedit, ut nihil turbet. Ita res, quamvis natura sua aequae propendeant in utranque partem, tamen a Deo inclinantur magis in alteram." Vermigli, *Loci Communes*, 94.

A similar approach with Vermigli is found in Zanchi. For Zanchi, the distinction of the two causes is essential for a right understanding of necessity and contingency.

Does the immutable divine determination impose necessity on things? He answers negatively as follows:

Thesis II. God's providence, as the first and immutable cause of all things, does (it is true) impose necessity on all things, i.e. on the secondary causes, to work out this or that, and therefore also on the effects, to happen this way. However, it does not remove but rather conserve the nature of the things and the secondary causes, some of which are determined at certain effects, but others undetermined. Therefore, it happens that, although in respect of the first cause all things happen with immutable necessity, still in respect of the secondary causes that work not coerced but according to their own natures, some things happen necessarily, but others contingently. While the divine providence stretches out from the beginning to the end, and disposes all things usefully.¹⁹⁴

Like Vermigli and Edwards, Zanchi argues that the freedom of choice exists on the level of the secondary cause.¹⁹⁵ That is, even though God's decree as the first cause is necessary in itself, the freedom of choice remains in mankind from the perspective of human will as the second cause.¹⁹⁶

Turretin also take a similar view with Edwards as to the relation between God's decree and human freedom. He distinguishes between the first and the second causes and argues that contingency exists with regard to the latter. According to Turretin, God's

¹⁹⁴ "Providentia De, tanquam prima & immutabilis rerum omnium causa, necessitatem quidem rebus omnibus, hoc est, causis secundis, ut hoc aut illud efficiant, eoque & effectis, ut ita eueniant, imponit. Quia tamen naturas rerum secundarumque causarum, quarum aliae ad certa effecta sunt definitae, aliae vero indefinitae, non tollit, sed potius consequat: idcirco fit, ut quanquam respectu causae primae, omnia certo prospicientis & immutabiliter ordinantis, omnia immutabili necessitate eueniant: respectu tamen causarum secundarum, non coacti sed iuxta suas naturas operantium, alia eueniant necessario, alia vero contingenter: divina providentia, a fine usque ad finem fortiter pertingente, & omnia utiliter disponente." Zanchi, *Opera theologicorum*, tomus secundus, col. 449.

¹⁹⁵ Zanchi, *Opera theologicorum*, tomus quartus, col. 92. see also *Opera theologicorum*, tomus tertius, col. 705.

¹⁹⁶ Zanchi, *Opera theologicorum*, tomus quartus, col. 92. Zanchi similarly distinguishes the difference between the nearest and the remote cause and insists that the freedom of choice exists on the level of the nearest cause. "Etsi enim respectu Dei mouetis & regentis, quicquid agunt, necessitate immobili agant: tamen respectu sui intellectus & voluntatis, hoc est, liberi arbitrij, nihil agunt scientes & volentes, nisi ex libero arbitrio. Unumquodque autem a proxima causa, non autem a remota denominari debet." Ibid., col. 93.

decree determined not only the futuration of all events in the world but also the mode of actualization of them, That is to say, God not only decided the events itself, but also that they would happen in this or that way, namely some necessarily, others contingently and freely. God's determination removes not "the liberty of spontaneity and indifference" but "the liberty of independence and the irresponsibility (to *anypeuthynon*) and uncontrol (*adespoton*) of the creature."¹⁹⁷ Thus, like Edwards, Turretin argues that one effect can be both necessary and contingent at the same time.¹⁹⁸ Regarding this, he states as follows:

That which maintains a determination to one thing by a physical necessity or a necessity of coaction, takes away liberty and contingency; but not that which maintains it only by a hypothetical necessity. For the certainty does not arise from the nature of second causes, which are free and contingent, but extrinsically from the immutability of the decree (which so determines the futuration of the event as not to change the nature of things, but permits necessary things to act necessarily, free things freely). Hence it is evident that the necessity and immutability of the decree indeed takes away contingency with respect to the first cause. For since all things happen necessarily, nothing can take place contingently. But this does not take it away with respect to second causes because the same decree which predetermined also determined the mode of futuration, so that the things having necessary causes should happen necessarily and those having contingent causes, contingently. Therefore the effect may properly be called both necessary and contingent at the same time, but in different respects (*kat' allo kai allo*): the former on the part of God and relative to the decree; the latter on the part of the thing and relative to second and proximate causes which might be disposed differently.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ Turretin, *Institutes I*, IV.IV.VIII (321). "Necessitas decreti tollit quidem libertatem independentiae, et ἀνυπεθνον et ἀδισποτον Creaturae, quia ita a prima causa pendet, ut sine ea nec esse nec operari possit; Sed non tollit libertatem spontaneitatis et indifferentiae, quia necessitas est tantum hypothetica, quae eventus certitudinem point, sed causarum secundarum anturam et proprietates non tollit." Idem, *Institutio I*, IV.IV.VIII (288).

¹⁹⁸ Turretin remarks that "Although in relation to the first cause, all things are said to be necessary, yet taken according to themselves certain things can be free, contingent and fortuitous because each thing is and may be judged according to themselves certain things can be free, contingent and particular causes." Turretin, *Institutes I*, IV.IV.VII (321).

¹⁹⁹ Turretin, *Institutes I*, IV.IV.VI (321). "Quod statuit determinationem ad unum per necessitatem physicam, vel coactionis, tollit libertatem et contingentiam; sed non quod eam statuit tantum per necessitatem hypotheticam; quia certitudo non oritur ex causarum secundarum natura, quae liberae sunt et contingentes, sed extrinsece ex decreti immutabilitate, quod ita determinat futurationem eventus, ut rerum naturam non mutet, sed res necessarias necessario, liberas libere agere sinat. Unde patet necessitatem et immutabilitatem decreti tollere quidem contingentiam respectu causae primae, quia cum omnia necessario eveniant, nihil potest contingenter fieri; sed non tollere eam respectu causarum secundarum, quia idem

To clarify this, Turretin brings in the case of Adam's first transgression as an example. He insists that Adam sinned both necessarily and freely. Adam's sin is necessary with respect to the first cause and it is contingent in terms of the second cause. Thus, for Turretin, even though Adam's first sin necessarily happened because of the decree and its futurition, Adam's sin was voluntary and most free act "with respect to his will and as to the mode."²⁰⁰ Finally, Turretin concludes as follows:

This necessity being extrinsic and hypothetical in the highest manner is consistent with the liberty of creatures (who do not cease to act most freely on their part, although the effect is necessary on the part of God). So far therefore from these being mutually opposed to each other, they amicably conspire together because through these means (although free), the events determined by the decree of God are promised and produced.²⁰¹

In this way, for Turretin, hypothetical necessity of divine decree ensures the certainty of the event. However, it does not destroy "the nature and properties of second causes."²⁰²

Voetius basically takes the same position as Edwards on how the relation between God's decree and human freedom can be explained in a coherent way. He asks how an event which is necessary can be contingent as well. Voetius explains that even though an event or thing is called necessary with regard to the first cause, it is contingent by its nature free and undetermined with respect to "its particular and proximate cause."²⁰³

Concerning this, he states as follows:

decretum quod praestituit futuritionem rerum, statuit etiam modum futuritionis, ut quae necessarias causas haberent necessario fierent, quae vero contingentes, contingenter: Atque ita effectus bene dicitur, et necessarius et contingens simul, sed κατ' ἄλλα καὶ ἄλλα; Illud a parte Dei et relate ad decretum; Istud a parte rei et relate ad causas secundas et proximas, quae aliter se habere potuerunt." Idem, *Institutio I*, IV.IV.VI (287-88).

²⁰⁰ Turretin, *Institutes I*, IV.IV.VIII (321).

²⁰¹ Turretin, *Institutes I*, IV.IV.IX (321). "Quia necessitas ista, ut jam dictum, utpote extrinseca et hypothetica, optime consistit cum libertate creaturarum, quae non desinunt liberrime agere a parte sui, licet effectus sit necessarius a parte Dei: Tantum abest ergo ut ista opponantur sibi invicem, ut amice inter se conspirent, quia per ista media quamvis libera, promoventur et producuntur eventus a Dei decreto definiti." Idem, *Institutio I*, IV.IV.IX (288).

²⁰² Turretin, *Institutes I*, IV.IV.VIII (321). Nevertheless, Turretin insists that second cause depends upon the first cause because the former can neither be nor move without the latter. Ibid.

Therefore, if a thing is called contingent in respect to second, particular, and individual cause; it is not repugnant that the same thing is called necessary in respect to the first cause. And in this way it is not a contradiction at all. Thus, they are agreeable to each other the best in this way that some effect is attributed to God and however it depends on the second cause as well because Scripture testifies both... Both the first and second causes concur both by subordinating and coordinating to the same one effect; and it does not exclude one another. And, if effect is attributed to the both in this way, they are least contradictory.²⁰³

Like Edwards, Voetius argues that the particular mode of all events and things is dependent on the decree of God, as well:

And this divine wisdom, will and power is the first and supreme foundation or origin of all contingency, while it pertains to efficient or natural or free cause, that is, power of understanding, willing and following. Therefore as entity of all thing and so its mode of contingency in contingent causes and effects, that of necessity in necessary causes and effects, is returned to the most wise, the most free, and immutable decree of God.²⁰⁴

Therefore, in Voetius' thought, since God's decree actualizes contingent things by contingent causes and effects, human free actions are ensured.

Voetius also elaborates more specifically how both God and human beings concur in bringing about one and the same contingent effect. He argues that, even though both God and human persons are free causes, God is the first cause, and human beings are the subordinated second causes. Thus, when two causes concur into the same act, God as first cause subordinates the second cause to Himself.²⁰⁵ Voetius asserts that "In doing so, the

²⁰³ "Si ergo res dicatur contingens in ordine ad causas secundas particulares, et proprias; non repugnant eandem dici necessariam in ordine ad causam primam. Et ita nulla est contradiction. Sic etiam optime conveniunt ista, effectum aliquem adscribi Deo, et tamen pendere a causis secundis; quia utrumque facit Scriptura.... Concurrent causa prima et secunda et subordinate et coordinate ad unum eandemque effectum; nec una alteram excludit. Et sic minime repugnati si effectus utrique tribuitur." Voetius, *De termino vitae*, 128.

²⁰⁴ Et haec sapientia, voluntas et potestas divina, prima ac suprema radix seu origo est omni contingentiae, tum ejus quae pertinet ad causam efficientem sive naturalem sive liberam, hoc est, potentiam intelligendi, volendi et exequendi. Ut ergo omnis rei entitas, ita et modus ejusdem, contingentiae scilicet in causis et effectibus contingentibus, necessitatis in causis et effectibus necessariis, reducit in sapientissimum, liberrimum et immutabile Dei decretum. Voetius, *De termino vitae*, 104.

²⁰⁵ "Et tamen actum voluntatis qui vitalis et liber est pendere a motione Dei non tantum sed et hominis, ita ut hominem determinet Deus et homo, tanquam duae causae totales immediate ad eundem actum concurrentes: Deus ut causa prima subordinando sibi secundam, homo in suo genere ut causa secunda instar instrumenti movendi se sub prima." Voetius, *De termino vitae*, 108.

outcome of what God effects remains sure and the contingency of the second cause is left intact, in a way that transcends the human grasp.”²⁰⁶ He, therefore, claims that Reformed doctrine of divine decree is essentially different from a Stoic fate that characterizes an absolute determination by causal necessity.²⁰⁷ Voetius, nevertheless, acknowledges that “humans cannot fully understand how exactly God causes contingent things to produce only the particular outcome that He ordained.”²⁰⁸

In sum, the comparison of Edwards with other Reformed thinkers shows that they share an essential agreement on the issue: the decree of God does not remove human freedom because a thing or event that is necessary with respect to the first cause (God’s will) can be contingent with respect to the second cause (its created cause). According to them, God’s decree preserves freedom and contingency of human beings rather than destroying them.

However, in spite of these commonalities such as the distinction of the different necessities and that of the first and second causes, unlike other Reformed scholastics such as Voetius and Turretin, Edwards does not delve into the further delicate philosophical questions or issues in his writings. For example, Voetius points to the difference between the structural moment of the mere potency of the faculty and that of the concrete acts of

²⁰⁶ “Quarto, totam ἀκαταληψίαν et quidem communem doctis partier et indoctis haerere in modo concordiae et coaptationis quo providential Dei agens ex immutabili consilio concurrat cum causis liberis ad effectus mutabiles et contingents, sic ut nec contingentia et libertas Dei liberam immutabilitatem, nec haec vicissim contingentiae et voluntarii mutabilem libertatem diminuat, τὸ ὅτι quod scilicet Deus divina et mirabili συμμετρία et ἑρπύσμα, operationem suam adaptet et contemperet ad causas, et operations inferiores, ex Scriptura et natura lumine, certissimum est: sed quomodo hoc sit nemo pervidit nisi solus Deus qui essentiam, vitam et causalitates suas novit perfectissime.” Voetius, *De termino vitae*, 130.

²⁰⁷ Voetius, *De termino vitae*, 108.

²⁰⁸ “Sed cogitandum potius Deum incomprehensibili quadam excellentia sic causa cum causis et operations suas cum operationibus earum inter se et ad se aptare ac temperare, omnibusque rebus atque eventibus ita providere, ut eventus infallibilis liberum efficiendi modum non laedat, quo voluntas actum iudicio practico definitum non invite sed voluntario producit imperio; nec vicissim radicalis et intrinseca voluntatis ad oppositum habitude effecti infallibilitatem atque ita provisionem Dei laedat, sed sequatur quid altius quam evitabilitas vel inevitabilitas, quas in causarum et effectuum inferiorum modis nos deprehendimus, et ita nominamus, et cujus analogum in causationibus divinis, per conceptus directos, adaequatos et positivos comprehendere aut eloqui non possumus.” Voetius, *De termino vitae*, 107.

the faculty for the clarification of the relation between divine necessity and contingency.²⁰⁹ He remarks as follows:

Contingent can be considered either as long as its own nature or essence or as long as its own state. It is not varied in that mode.... Whatever thing is truly in its own nature either contingent or necessary, and it will remain constantly in whatever state, either it would be in power or in act. And in that mode contingent thing is varied... therefore, contingent goes through not about its own nature to other... but about state to status; as though future used to be in the state of potentiality, present is called in state of actuality, in the former it would be indeterminate or indifferent to either part, but in the latter it would be determinate to one... therefore one and the same thing can be called contingent or necessary, indeterminate and determinate from different respect: in its own nature it is contingent, indifferent, and indeterminate to one part of contradiction, essentially or separately opposite of necessary thing...²¹⁰

Indeed, Voetius teaches that the status of the contingent thing can be changed from the “status of potentiality” to the “status of actuality.” This distinction is also often clearly found in other scholastics’ discussion of the relation between divine necessity and human freedom such as that of Turretin because it is significant in order to argue against Reformed adversaries’ idea that human will is always indifferent, even after having posited the requisites for acting.²¹¹ However, Edwards does not mention this distinction or deal with a related issue on it in order to support his view. In addition to this, Edwards does not use scholastic distinctions, which was significant for other previous Reformed scholastics to resolve the issue, such as “*In actu primo & in actu secundo, in sensu diviso & in sensu composito*, and *simultatem potentiae & potentiam simultatis*. This difference,

²⁰⁹ This is a structural or logical order concerning structural moments, and not temporal succession.

²¹⁰ “Contingens considerari potest vel quoad naturam seu essentiam suam, vel quoad statum suum. Illo modo non variatur ... Est enim res quaelibet natura sua vel contingens vel necessaria, et talis perpetuo manet in quocunque statu, sive sit in potentiali sive in actu. Isto modo et variatur res contingens ... Transit ergo contingens non de natura sua in aliam ... sed de statu in statum; ut quod futurum erat in statu potentialitatis, praesens dicatur in statu actualitatis, quod ibi indeterminatum erat seu indifferens ad utramque partem, hic sit determinatum ad unum Potest ergo una eademque res quae respectu diversi status dicitur contingens, aut necessaria, indeterminate et determinate, natura sua esse contingens, indifferens et indeterminate ad unam contradictionis partem, essentialiter seu disparte opposite rei necessariae...” Voetius, *De termino vitae*, 104-105.

²¹¹ See Turretin, *Institutes I*, X.III.I-XV (665-668). This distinction is also seen in Vermigli although he does not engage in the debate on the nature of the indifference of the will. For example, see Vermigli, “Providence,” 193.

as noted already in chapter 3, might result from the intellectual background of Edwards' time. Namely, the intellectual transition in the second period of High Orthodoxy might influence the formation of Edwards' theology and consequently may have caused him to lose some scholastic languages, terms, and distinctions which involved previous Reformed discussion of the issue. Or simply he might not have seen the need to deal with these matters in his discussion of the issue. Whatever reasons there might be, however, in none of his treatment of the issue, did Edwards contradict the teaching of his Reformed contemporaries and colleagues. Rather, these comparisons show that Edwards faithfully follows the teaching of his Reformed ancestors and contemporaries.

VI. Criticism of Previous Scholarship on the Issue

Finally, the examination of Edwards' understanding of the relation between divine decree and human freedom enables us to challenge previous misunderstandings on the Reformed orthodox doctrine of free choice. As discussed in chapter 1, it has been argued by many scholars that Reformed doctrine of divine decree and human free choice conduces to a philosophical or metaphysical determinism. However, Edwards' approach to the subject points toward a different conclusion, particularly to the extent that he consistently echoes the thought of his Reformed brethren. First, as indicated already, Edwards' understanding of the divine decree does not imply any necessity of compulsion to human beings. Indeed, Edwards like the older Reformed tradition generally affirms a spontaneity of the will and specifically denies that the will can be compelled. The divine decree embodies a necessity of certainty or infallibility. Edwards' teaching on the necessity of the event on account of divine decision perfectly matches its contingency and freedom.

Furthermore, according to Edwards, the contingency of future events is warranted by the fact that God decides to produce them contingently or freely. Having decided to produce them contingently, it is necessary that they happen, but even necessary that they

happen contingently. Consequently, for him, human freedom is not endangered because the effectivity of divine decree secures both the futurity and the contingency of the effect.

Second, for Edwards, an event or thing that is necessary with respect to God's decree can be contingent with respect to the secondary causes. That is, in spite of divine decree, our wills are still placed among the causes of things; God works together with concurring second causes which act freely and contingently. In this regard, human action as a secondary cause is still contingent in spite of divine determination. Thus, Edwards' distinction between the first and the second causes helps us overcome the false charge that Reformed theology is deterministic.

In short, there is no evidence that in Edwards' view, the Reformed doctrine of decree and human free choice leads to metaphysical or philosophical determinism. Insofar as human freedom and contingencies are maintained by Edwards specifically with respect to the immutable and infallible decree of God, his thought does not conform to the stereotype of Reformed theology as a deterministic system.

VII. Conclusion

Edwards distinguishes the divine decree on human beings into God's decrees on temporal and bodily concerns and on spiritual ones. However, Edwards pays more attention to God's decree with respect to the spiritual matters. In particular, in his writings such as *Veritas Redux* and *Arminian Doctrine Condemn'd*, Edwards' discussion of God's decree on the spiritual state of mankind focuses mainly on two issues (1) whether the divine election is absolute or conditional, and (2) whether God's decree inflicts any force or absolute necessity on human freedom, especially in the matter of human salvation.

Concerning the former, Edwards vehemently opposes the idea of conditional decrees of election. For him, the decree is utterly free, absolute, and inalterable, logically

antecedent to all things, predicated upon nothing but the nature of the divine essence. Edwards tries to prove this particularly by two arguments: God is omniscient and His decree is immutable. To clarify the issue, he also distinguishes the difference between a conditional decree and a decree that contains conditions in it and argues that Reformed doctrine of predestination is not of the former sort but of the latter. Interestingly, however, Edwards suggests that there might be an exception in divine decree. That is, he mentions the possibility of a group of persons who are in a state of probation and are not definitely predestined to salvation or damnation. Nevertheless, Edwards suggest this threefold rank of people in decree as a probable option without any strenuous claim.

Regarding the relation between divine decree and human freedom, Edwards strongly argues that the former does not deny the latter at all. First, he distinguishes two different kinds of necessity: the necessity of restraint or compulsion and that of the event or infallibility. Edwards asserts that even though the former destroy man's freedom, the latter that the divine determination brings with it does not take it away. Moreover, he claims that since God decreed not only the things to happen but also the modes of things, the effectivity of his decree is such that both contingent things happen contingently and necessary things happen necessarily.

Second, in order to show that the divine decree does not destroy any possibility of contingencies, Edwards employs scholastic distinction between God as the first cause and mankind as the second cause. He insists that necessity does not apply to the second cause but only to the first cause. Thus, in spite of the immutability of God's decree, freedom and contingency can exist on the level of the secondary causes. For Edwards, in such a way, one and the same thing can be both necessary and contingent, though from a different perspective.

Meanwhile, the comparison of Edwards with other Reformed scholastics such as Voetius and Turretin shows that they basically take the same position as Edwards on how God's decree can exist with human freedom in a coherent way. Despite Edwards'

unconcern about some delicate philosophical issues, there is no substantial difference between Edwards and other Reformed thinkers in terms of the content of the discussion. This indicates that Edwards firmly stands in continuity with the Reformed tradition on the issue.

Finally, given the conclusions of Edwards' thought on divine decree and predestination, the charge that the Reformed doctrine of the relation between the necessity of God's decree and the freedom of human actions leads to metaphysical or philosophical determinism would not apply to Edwards' position. Contrary to previous common accusation, Edwards' discussion of the issue shows that God's decree itself not only preserves but also establishes human freedom without destroying it.

Chapter 5: Edwards on Foreknowledge and Human Freedom

I. Edwards on the Nature of the Knowledge of God

Edwards' general understanding of the knowledge of God is found in "A Discourse concerning Divine Nature and Attributes" of *Theologia Reformata* I.¹ In this section, Edwards first begins his discussion with the primary and leading attributes of God: "God's existence," "the life of God," and "God's spirituality."² He teaches that they are the foundation of all God's other attributes. Edwards then turns to attributes which result from them. He specifically addresses three things: (1) "omniscience, which respects the divine understanding," (2) "omnipotence, which relates to God's acting," and (3) "holiness, which appertains to the divine will."³

In Edwards' theology, the concept of divine knowledge and wisdom functions as a necessary corollary to the concept of divine omniscience. He states that "Omniscience comprehends in it universal knowledge and wisdom, for these two terms give us an exact notion of this excellent property of God." Edwards defines God's knowledge as "His knowledge is that whereby he sees and understands all things, and is thoroughly

¹ Concerning the Reformed understanding of the intellectual attributes of God in the 16th and 17th centuries, see Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: the Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*. vol. 3. *The Divine Essence and Attributes* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2003), 384-431.

² Edwards states that "The first attribute of God is his existence. ... I must shew the particular nature of it, and how it differs from the existence of all other beings and things. ... The next attribute, and which is very nearly related to that which I have been speaking of, is the life of God. This is more than his absolute being or existence, for it is that glorious property whereby he exerts his essence, and acts agreeable to his excellent nature. ... The third attribute of God is his spirituality, for 'tis positively affirmed, God is a spirit, John 4.24." John Edwards, *Theologia Reformata: or, The Body and Substance of the Christian Religion, comprised in distinct Discourses or Treatises upon The Apostles Creed, The Lord's Prayer, and The Ten Commandments*. Vol. I. (London: 1714), 44-59. However, a detailed analysis of Edwards' discussion of the primary attributes of God is beyond the scope of this study. For the purpose of this study, I will focus only on his understanding of divine knowledge and its related issues.

³ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 59.

acquainted with the nature of them.”⁴ In contrast, he explains God’s wisdom as “that whereby he orders and disposes all things.”⁵

Specifically, Edwards teaches three propositions concerning the nature of the knowledge of God. First, he insists that, as in Matthew 11:27, “God perfectly knows Himself, and all his divine perfections, and whatever belongs to his infinite nature.” That is, since God is perfect being, “this self-knowledge is part of the divine perfection.” Second, Edwards claims that God possesses “a complete knowledge of all things without him, as well as within him.” Third, he argues that “He has the knowledge of things past, present, and all things to come. The knowledge of all things to come is called foreknowledge.”⁶ Consequently, for Edwards, divine knowledge can be considered either as God’s knowledge of himself or as God’s knowledge of finite or created things – and since he knows himself and all things as well, he is said to be omniscient.

Edwards also teaches that “God not only knows those things that shall come to pass, but those that might, though they never will.” In particular, he elaborates on the latter as “that God sees those things which would come to pass if such and such things accompanied them; but with all, he knows that they shall not actually come to pass, and this his knowledge is certain.”⁷ Edwards here distinguishes between the eternal, infinite

⁴ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 59.

⁵ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 59-60. See also *Ibid.*, 67. The distinction between divine knowledge and wisdom is commonly found in Reformed scholastics of the 17th century except some of the orthodox such as Perkins and Ames. Muller, *PRRD* III, 385-86. For example, Edward Leigh distinguishes that “God’s knowledge differs from his wisdom in our apprehension thus: his knowledge is conceived as the mere apprehension of every object, but his wisdom is conceived as that whereby he doth order and dispose all things. His knowledge is conceived as an act; his wisdom as a habit or inward principle; not that it is so, but only we apprehend it in this manner.” Edward Leigh, *A Treatise of Divinity* (London, 1646), II.vii (p. 65). For Edwards’ further detailed explanation on the concept of divine wisdom, see *ibid.*, 67-69.

⁶ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 60.

⁷ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 61.

divine knowledge of the divine essence and of all possibility and the divine knowledge of all actuality *ad extra*.⁸

Accordingly, even though he neither employs the scholastic terms for this distinction nor provides any further detailed account of it,⁹ his explanation of the nature of God's knowledge indicates that Edwards follows the standard medieval and Reformed distinction between two categories of divine knowing, the *scientia necessaria sive naturalis et scientia simplicis intelligentiae et scientia indefinita* (necessary or natural knowledge and knowledge of uncompounded intelligence and indefinite knowledge) and the *scientia libera sive voluntaria et scientia visionis et scientia definita* (free or voluntary knowledge and visionary knowledge and definite knowledge).¹⁰

For our current discussion of the relation between divine necessity and human freedom, Edwards' understanding of God's foreknowledge is particularly important.

Edwards defines foreknowledge as follows: "to foreknow, is, in its proper meaning, to

⁸ For Edwards' general understanding of the manner, objects, and degree of divine knowing, see Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 59-67. Regarding the Reformed orthodox writers' understanding of them, see Muller, *PRRD* III, 397-406.

⁹ Other Reformed thinkers offer a series of scholastic distinctions concerning the divine knowledge. For example, Petrus van Mastricht states that "XIV. Interim, non uno modo, omnia ista Deus perspicit. Unde varie dispescitur. Est enim scientia generalis, qua, circa quaevis occupatur uniformiter; est specialis, qua suos novit peculiariter Rom VIII. 29. I Pet. 1.2. Est porro theoretica, qua novit tantum; est & practica, qua operatur insuper: idque cum affectu, vel prono Psal. 1.6. vel averso Apoc. III. 15.16. Et prioris defectu, se non esse, aliquando dicit Matth. VII. 23. Et diversitatis hujus respectu, varia quoque induit nomina: ratione praeteritorum, dicitur recordatio & remiscientia Psal. XXV. 6.7. utique ἀνθρώποις; secundum affectam & effectum, non secundum notitiam simpliciter: ratione praesentium, visio & intuitus Heb. IV. 13. ratione futurorum, duplex nomen obtinet: scientiae naturalis, seu simplicis intelligentiae, qua, circa puro possibilia, eorum possibilitatem perspicit, inifura omnifussicientia, & omnipotentia; scientia libera seu visionis, qua, primo quidem, videt ordinem illum, universalem, olim ab aeterno decretum, rebus sus tempore conferendum, & post in creatione collatum, per quem, res omnes, talem inter se dependentiam nexumque fortiuntur, ut inde Deus, quamvis nunquam actu futura decrevit, ut futura (positis scil. ad agendum praerequisitis) praevidere, ac praedicere possit, v.g. stramen aridum, si admoveatur igni, exurendum esse." Petrus van Mastricht, *Theoretico-practica theologia, qua, per capita theologica, pars dogmatica, elenctica et practica, perpetua successione conjugantur, praecedunt in usum operas, paraleipomena, seu skeleton de optima concionandi methodo*, Vol 1. (Amsterdam: Henricus & Theodorus Boom, 1682-87), II.xiii.14.

¹⁰ Richard A. Muller, "Grace, Election, and Contingent Choice: Arminius's Gambit and the Reformed Response" in *The Grace of God: The Bondage of Will: Historical and Theological Perspectives on Calvinism*, vol 2. eds. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 264. See also Muller, *PRRD* III, 406-410. Heinrich Hepp, *Die Dogmatik der evangelisch-reformierten Kirch*, ed. Ernst Bizer (Neukirchen: Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1935), 48, 64-65.

have a knowledge of things and persons beforehand, to see and understand them a far off, and (when it is spoken of God) from eternity.”¹¹ Simply speaking, it is God’s knowledge of things to come. Thus, he maintains that “Everything and person that was to be afterwards, was seen and known by him, as if it actually existed.”¹²

On this doctrinal point, as in the case of the divine decree in general, Edwards was in direct conflict with several adversaries. Thus, Edwards was pressed to argue a traditional view of divine foreknowledge against his enemies, especially the Socinians and the Arminians. First of all, he states that some thinkers do not attribute foreknowledge to God because “all things are present with him and he knows them together and at once.”¹³ Edwards however replies that foreknowledge can be certainly ascribed to God because “as he knows things past with us, as such; and things present with us, as present, so he sees things to come with us, as to come.” Thus, he claims that God is truly and properly said to foreknow things to come.¹⁴ Having briefly countered this objection, Edwards moves on to the Socinians’ and Arminians’ objections in sequence in order to refute them and advocate Reformed doctrine of foreknowledge.

II. Edwards’ Debate with Reformed Adversaries on God’s Foreknowledge

1. Debates with the Socinians

The doctrine of God’s foreknowledge of future contingencies was one of the critical issues in the debate between Edwards and the Socinians. In particular, Edwards strongly opposes the Socinians’ claims of divine incertitude of future contingencies. According to him, Socinians such as Valentinus Smalcus (1572-1622) and Johann Crellius (1590-1633) argue that future contingencies cannot possibly be foreknown to

¹¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 81.

¹² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 82.

¹³ Edwards does not specify who they are.

¹⁴ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 60.

God because they are not the object of knowledge.¹⁵ More specifically, they claim that, since human actions are merely contingent, they are uncertain. If so, they cannot be known to God because there can be no certain knowledge for uncertainties.¹⁶

Edwards rebuts the Socinians' objections on several arguments. First, Edwards asserts that even though future human actions are merely contingent from human perspective, they are not from God's perspective. Concerning this, he states as follows:

because though mens actions are indifferent and contingent in some respect, i.e. if we regard the free principle of man's will, whence they flow, as also the variety of objects which they are conversant about, yet in respect of God, they cannot be said to be contingent or casual, because nothing (of what nature soever) happens without his disposal and providence, and consequently, there is nothing hid from him: yea, all futurities are fix'd and certain as to him, because of his decree, and so are known.¹⁷

Indeed, for Edwards, given the different application of "necessity," one and the same thing can be both contingent and necessary.¹⁸ Namely, he insists that "He hath a fix'd and determinate prescience, even of those things which are in themselves free and undetermined."¹⁹

Concerning this issue, other Reformed thinkers take the same position with Edwards. For instance, Ridgley argues as follows:

1. They are the objects of his providence, and therefore known unto him from the beginning: thus the fall of a sparrow to the ground is a casual thing, yet our saviour says, that this is not without his providence. Therefore, 2. That which is casual, or

¹⁵ John Edwards, *The Socinian Creed: or A Brief Account of the Professed Tenents and Doctrines of the Foreign and English Socinians. Wherein is shew'd the Tendency of them to Irreligion and Athesim. With Proper Antidotes against them* (London: 1697), 39. cf. Muller, *PRRD* III, 419-20.

¹⁶ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 60. Cf. Muller comments that "The Socinians simply denied the divine omniscience – with their assumption of the finitude and, according to some of their teachers, the restricted heavenly location of the divine essence, they had no difficulty in arguing that God has a limited foreknowledge of future contingents, indeed, that omniscience could not be predicated of God." Muller, *PRRD* III, 396. See also *Ibid.*, 426.

¹⁷ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 61.

¹⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 43.

¹⁹ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 61.

accidental to us, is not so to him; so that though we cannot have a certain or determinate fore-knowledge thereof, it does not follow that he has not...²⁰

In a similar vein with Ridgely, Wilhelmus à Brakel claims that one should distinguish between God's perspective and human beings' in order to understand how God infallibly knows all future contingencies:

Keep in mind that from God's perspective, who is the first cause of all things, everything is an absolute certainty even though it appears to be uncertain when viewed from the perspective of secondary causes. From God's perspective there are no contingencies; such is only true from man's perspective. Thus, in defining the freedom of the will, we must not think of it as functioning independently from God, on an equal plane with His will, or as a neutral entity; rather, this freedom is a function of necessity. Thus, the freedom of the will does not contradict the certain foreknowledge of God. Man, without coercion and by arbitrary choice, performs that which God has most certainly decreed, and of which He was cognizant that it would occur.²¹

Having provided a series of examples in the Bible, Charnock also states as follows:

Now we must know, that what is accidental in regard of the creature, is not so in regard of God; the manner of Ahab's death was accidental, in regard of the hand by which he was slain, but not in regard of God who foretold his death, and foreknew the shot, and directed the arrow; God was not uncertain before of the manner of his fall, nor hovered over the battle to watch for an opportunity to accomplish his own prediction; what may be or not be, in regard of us, is certain in regard of God; to imagine that what is accidental to us, is so to God, is to measure God by our short line... That may be necessary in regard of God's foreknowledge, which is merely accidental in regard of the natural disposition of the immediate causes which do actually produce it; contingent in its own nature, and in regard of us, but fixed in the knowledge of God.²²

Turretin provides a more detailed explanation of the issue. He first distinguishes two kinds of contingencies: contingencies with respect to the first cause and the second

²⁰ Ridgely, *Body of Divinity*, 96.

²¹ Wilhelmus à Brakel, *The Christian's reasonable Service*, vol I. trans. Bartel Elshout (Morga, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publication, 1992), 105.

²² Stephen Charnock, *The Existence and Attributes of God* I. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 439. In particular, he uses an analogy of a master who sends two servants to one and the same place through two different ways without letting them know one another. He remarks that "their meeting is accidental to them, one knows not of the other, but it was foreseen by the master that they should so meet." Ibid., 439-440.

causes, respectively. The former refers to the contingency which “can be produced or not produced by God.”²³ In contrast, the latter indicates the contingency in that the second causes “can produce or not produce their effect.” Thus, this is distinguished from necessary cause. Turretin insists that the question of the current controversy is related with contingency not in the former but in the latter sense.²⁴

He then argues that a future contingent thing with respect to the second cause involves both “the certainty of event” and “the mode of production.” That is, “as future it signifies the certainty of event, but as contingent the mode of production.” The former results from the decree of God as the first cause while the latter from “the constitution of the second cause.”²⁵

On the basis of these distinctions, Turretin clarifies the nature of the issue as follows:

whether things, not any whatsoever and having a necessary cause (for there is no doubt as to these), but contingent (which have a free cause) and indifferent (*adiaphoron*); not logically as to the first cause, in which sense even the most necessary things are contingent (since they can be and not be), but physically (as to the contingent second cause) fall under the infallible knowledge of God, not as knowing them only indeterminately and probably, but determinately and most certainly. This the Socinians deny; we affirm.²⁶

²³ Turretin states that “so all creatures are contingent with respect to God because he might not have created any if he had so willed.” Turretin, *Institutes* I, III.XII.VIII (208).

²⁴ Turretin, *Institutes* I, III.XII.VIII (208).

²⁵ Turretin, *Institutes* I, III.XII.IX (208).

²⁶ Turretin, *Institutes* I, III.XII.X (208-09). “An future, non quaevis et quae habent causam necessariam, de his enim non dubitatur, Sed contingentia, quae habent causam liberam, et ἀδιαφορον, non logice resp. causae primae, quo sensu etiam maxime necessaria sunt contingentia, quae possunt esse et non esse; sed physice resp. causae secundae contingentis, cadant sub scientiam Dei infallibilem, non ut indeterminate tantum et verisimiliter ea cognoscat, sed determinate et certissime: Quod negant Sociniani; Nos affirmamus.” Idem, *Institutio* I, III.XII.X (188-89).

Herein, Turretin affirms that God know future contingents not indeterminately and probably but determinately and absolutely.²⁷ He attempts to prove this by distinguishing between the first cause and the second cause:

XIX. Of whatever things there is not a determinate truth, of them there cannot be a certain and infallible knowledge if they are absolutely and in every respect indeterminate. But future contingent things are not such. For if they are indeterminate with respect to the second cause and in themselves, they are not so as to the first cause which decreed their futurity. If their truth is indeterminate with respect to us (who cannot see in which direction the free second cause is about to incline itself), it is not so with respect to God to whom all future things appear as present.²⁸

As with Edwards, Turretin argues that future contingent events are not contingent with regard to the first cause. He gives an example of Christ's death on the cross to elaborate his argument. Here, Turretin particularly uses the distinction between the compound sense and the divided sense:

It is not inconsistent (asystaton) for the same thing to be said to be possible and impossible at the same time (but as to different things [kat' allo kai allo]): possible with respect to potency or the second cause (considered in itself and in a divided sense) and impossible relatively (on the hypothesis of the divine decree and foreknowledge). So it was possible for Christ not to be crucified, if God had so willed, and impossible on account of the decree. What therefore in the compound sense and on the supposition of the decree of God concerning the futurity of the thing was impossible not to take place; yet in the divided sense (and the decree being laid aside) was possible not to take place.²⁹

²⁷ Thus, Turretin condemns the Socinians' attempt to explain knowledge of God as mere conjecture or mere fallible probabilities. Turretin, *Institutes* I, III.XII.VII (208).

²⁸ Turretin, *Institutes* I, III.XII.XIX (210-11). "Quorum non est determinate veritas, eroum non potest esse certa et infallibilis scientia, si absolute et omnimodo sunt indeterminate; sed future contingentia talia non sunt: Nam si sunt indeterminate respectu causae secundae, et in seipsis, non sunt respectu causae primae, quae eorum futurityem decrevit; si indeterminate est eorum veritas respectu nostri, qui non possumus videre quo se inclinatura sit causa secunda libera, non est talis respectu Dei, cui omnia future obversantur ut praesentia." Idem, *Institutio* I, III.XII.XIX (190).

²⁹ Turretin, *Institutes* I, III.XII.XX (211). "Non est ασιστατον idem dici possibile et impossibile simul, sed κατ' ἄλλο και ἄλλο; possibile respectu potentiae seu causae secundae, in se consideratae et in sensu diviso, et impossibile secundum quid, ex hypothesi decreti et praescientiae Dei. Ita possibile fuit Christum non crucifigi, si Deus voluisset, et impossibile propter decretum: quod ergo in sensu composito, et supposito Dei decreto de futuritye rei, est impossibile non fieri, tamen in sensu diviso et seposito eo decreto, possibile esset non fieri." Idem, *Institutio* I, III.XII.XX (190). Turretin also argues that "It is one thing for a thing to be able to be done or not to be done (i.e., for a thing to be possible or not to be future

Turretin also explains the fall of Adam through the distinction between “the truth of futurity” and “the truth of possibility.” According to him there is no repugnancy between Adam is about to fall, and he is able not to fall. Turretin maintains that the former speaks of the truth of futurity from decree, while the latter of the truth of possibility “from the disposition of the second cause.”³⁰

In sum, for Edwards and other Reformed thinkers, the contingent nature of future human actions is not a problem of God for knowing them. Unlike the Socinians who argue for the absolute freedom of future contingencies, Edwards and other Reformed scholastics insist that even though future contingent events are undetermined and contingent with respect to the second causes, they are determined and certain with regards to the first cause. Therefore, they all argue that God can infallibly know future contingent events.

Moreover, in developing this argument, Edwards affirms that this divine foreknowledge does not impose any force on human will:

... because all things are certain with God, be they never so free, arbitrary and contingent, as to men, for they were pre-determin'd by him. But this pre-determination, and his prescience, hath no influx upon man's will: there is no force upon man by God's eternal decree and foresight. These are not the cause why things are done: but yet nothing that is done comes to pass without them.³¹

For Edwards, as has already examined in chapter 4, God not only knows all things, but He also knows the mode of a thing, whether necessary or contingent. What God knows as contingent is, therefore, established with certainty as contingent. That is, God foreknows

hypothetically); another for a thing to be able to be at the same time future and not future.” “Contingency applies to the former method, not to the second which is absurd (*asystatos*).” Ibid., III.XII.XXI (211). Maccovius similarly claims that “Potest esse necessarium & contingens diverso respectu; v.g. ossa Christi poterant frangi & non frangi; poterant frangi, si in sensu diviso spectes: non poterant frangi, si eadem spectes in sensu composito, id est, ratione decreti divini & providentiae Dei actualis. Imo, omne quod necessarium est ex hypothesi divini decreti & providentiae actualis, ita distingui debet, tali potential constans, secundum quam poterat determinari ad hoc oppositum, aut aliud.” Johannes Maccovius, *Loci communes theologici* (Amsterdam, 1658), 157.

³⁰ Turretin, *Institutes* I, III.XII.XXII (211).

³¹ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 61.

contingent as contingent. Thus, Edwards asserts that in spite of God's determination and His foreknowledge, the will of mankind still can function freely and voluntarily without any coercion.³²

Venema similarly claims that divine foreknowledge does not destroy human freedom because the former brings only a certainty of event:

We answer, our liberty is not wholly independent but restricted. For it depends on motives and on the direction given to it by God. For it depends on motives and on the direction given to it by God. It would be infringed by the application of force whether from within or from without; but it is not infringed by the certainty of an event. A thing may therefore be certainly future, while yet our freedom remains unaffected; because it will happen while we at the same time act freely, and thus may be known by God as certainly future.³³

Charnock also argues that since God knows the manner of human actions, God's foreknowledge does not destroy freedom of mankind but rather establishes it:

God did not only foreknow our actions, but the manner of our actions. That is, he did not only know that we would do such actions, but that we would do them freely; he foresaw that the will would freely determine itself to this or that; the knowledge of God takes not away the nature of things; though God knows possible things, yet they remain in the nature of possibility; and though God knows contingent things, yet they remain in the nature of contingencies; and though God knows free agents, yet they remain in the nature of liberty. God did not foreknow the actions of man, as necessary, but as free; so that liberty is rather established by this foreknowledge, than removed.³⁴

³² Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 61.

³³ Herman Venema, *Institutes of Theology*, part I. trans. Alexander Brown (Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1850), 151.

³⁴ Charnock, *Existence and Attributes*, 449-50. According to Charnock, foreknowledge itself is not the cause of actions. Rather, divine knowledge is related to causality by means of the will: "God's foreknowledge is not, simply considered, the cause of anything. It puts nothing into things, but only beholds them as present, and arising from their proper causes. The knowledge of God is not the principle of things, or the cause of their existence, but directive of the action; nothing is because God knows it, but because God wills it, either positively or permissively; God knows all things possible; yet, because God knows them they are not brought into actual existence, but remain still only as things possible; knowledge only apprehends a thing, but acts nothing; it is the rule of acting, but not the cause of acting; the will is the immediate principle, and the power the immediate cause; to know a thing is not to do a thing, for then we may be said to do everything that we know; but every man knows those things which he never did, nor never will do; knowledge in itself is an apprehension of a thing, and is not the cause of it." *Ibid.*, 448.

Turretin takes the same position with Edwards, Charnock, and Venema. He maintains that physical and coactive necessity destroys the freedom of mankind.³⁵ However, Turretin claims that since God's foreknowledge does not result in such necessity, it does not deny human freedom:

The infallibility and certainty of the event does not take away the nature of the contingency of things because things can happen necessarily as to the event and yet contingently as to the mode of production. If there is granted a prescience of future contingent things, all things would take place necessarily by necessity of consequence, by the necessity of infallibility; not by necessity of the consequent and absolute. Therefore, there remains always this distinction between necessary and contingent things. The former have an intrinsic necessity because they arise from necessary proximate causes and are such in themselves; while the contingent, although having an extrinsic necessity by reason of the event, yet in their nature take place by contingent causes.³⁶

Therefore, Turretin argues, like Edwards, that God knows future contingencies as contingent:

The principal foundation of the divine knowledge about future contingent things is not either the nature of second cause (which is supposed to be indifferent [adiaphoros] or simply the divine essence, as immutable by creatures and as capable of producing them because it is the foundation of the possibility of things; the decree alone by which things pass from a state of possibility to a state of futurity (in which he sees them as it were determined and certainly future); and because the decree of God is not occupied about the thing, but also about the mode of the thing (i.e., that the thing may take place according to the nature of its cause, necessarily if necessary, freely if free, God sees them in the decree not only as certainly future, but also as certainly future contingently).³⁷

³⁵ Turretin, *Institutes* I, III.XII.XXIV (211).

³⁶ Turretin, *Institutes* I, III.XII.XXIII (211). "Infallibilitas et certitudo eventus, non tollit naturam contingentiae rerum; quia res possunt fieri necessario quoad eventum, et tamen contingenter quoad modum productionis. Si datur praescientia futurorum contingentium, omnia fient necessario necessitate consequentiae, secundum quid, infallibilitatis; non consequentis et absoluta. Manet ergo discrimen semper inter necessaria et contingentia, quod illa habent necessitatem intrinsecam, quia oriuntur a causis proximis necessariis, et talia sunt in se: Contingentia vero, quae licet necessitatem habeant extrinsecam, ratione eventus, tamen natura sua per causas contingentes fiunt." Idem, *Institutio* I, 191. See also Turretin, *Institutes* I, III.XII.XXIII (218).

³⁷ Turretin, *Institutes* I, III.XII.XVIII (210). "Praecipuum fundamentum Scientiae divinae circa futura contingentia, non est, vel causarum secundarum natura, quae supponitur esse ἀδιαφορεῖς vel simpliciter Essentia Divina, ut imitabilis a creaturis, et ut potens illa producere, quod est fundamentum possibilitatis rerum; sed decretum solum, per quod res a statu possibilitatis transeunt ad statum futurationis, in quo ea tanquam praefinita et certo futura videt: Et quia Dei decretum non versatur circa rem, sed etiam

In short, Edwards and other Reformed scholastics insist that God infallibly foreknows future events. However, their understanding of divine foreknowledge does not cause any necessity of compulsion for human beings.³⁸ Instead, they argue that divine foreknowledge brings the necessity of certainty or infallibility. Hence, Edwards and other Reformed writers' teachings on the necessity of the event on account of divine foreknowledge perfectly ensure its contingency and freedom. Since it is necessary that an event will happen in the mode in which it is determined to be in the future, if the event is contingent and free, it will happen contingently and freely.

Moreover, we can see from Edwards and other Reformed scholastics' writings that God not only foreknows the events itself, but also foreknows the mode of the events. In other words, God foreknows that they would happen in this or that way, namely some necessarily, others contingently and freely. Therefore, the contingency of future events is warranted by the fact that God foreknows contingents as contingents. These arguments are significant because they defy the myth that Reformed doctrine of divine foreknowledge results in Stoic fatalism or metaphysical determinism.

Edwards' second argument against Socinians' claim on divine incertitude of future contingents is based on divine perfection. He maintains that God knows and foresees all things "by virtue of the excellency and transcendency of his nature."³⁹ Edwards states as follows:

circa modum rei, it. ut res fiat juxta naturam causae, necessario si necessaria, libere si libera, Deus videt ea in decreto, non modo ut certo futura, sed etiam ut certo futura contingenter." Idem, *Institutio* I, III.XII.XVIII (190). See also "Quando Deus concipit futura contingencia ut certo futura, non concipit ea aliter quam sunt; sed ea relate ad decretum novit, ut necessario eventura et determinata, quae relate ad causas suas novit indeterminata et contingenter futura. Praescit ergo ea Deus, tum in seipso, et decreto suo ut prima causa, et sic nec essaria sunt propter immutabilitatem decreti et infallibilitatem praescientiae; tum in causis secundis, a quibus proxime et immediate dependent, quae sunt per se indefinitae, et ita sunt contingencia." Idem, *Institutio* I, 192.

³⁸ Cf. Muller, "Grace, Election, and Contingent Choice," 268-269, 275, 277; idem, *PRRD* III, 426.

³⁹ Edwards, *The Socinian Creed*, 39.

The perfection of the divine understanding is such that it is able to penetrate into the wills of men, be they never so free, and can infallibly discern and foresee which way they will incline, yea which way they will certainly turn. For the nature of all futurities, whether they be necessary or whether they be contingent, is the same as to God.⁴⁰

In order to maintain the absolute omniscience of God against Socinianism, Edwards also presents a series of scriptural proofs and several arguments based on Scripture. In particular, Edwards relies on Scripture which refers to God's prediction of contingent events in the future: therefore he knows them and knows them infallibly, for otherwise he could not predict them certainly.⁴¹

As, for example, the prediction of enslavement of the Israelites in Egypt for about 400 years in Genesis 15:13-14 and God's restoration of the Israelites in Isaiah 42:9, both of these instances indicate divine foreknowledge of future contingent events. That is, since God foretells these future contingencies, it is certain that He foreknows them. In addition, Edwards claims that the Scriptures such as Deuteronomy 31:20-21, Psalm 139:2-4; 6, Acts 2:23 and Isaiah 41:22-23 prove that even "the most contingent events are foreseen by God."⁴² On the basis of these scriptural passages, Edwards concludes as follows:

Whence it is evident that God hath a full view of whatever shall afterwards happen, he foresees every thought, purpose and design before they are conceived, much more before they pass into act. He foreknows the very motions and tendencies, the

⁴⁰ Edwards, *The Socinian Creed*, 39. Similar argument is found in other Reformed orthodox writers, as well. For example, Charnock insists that "because of the infinite fullness and perfection of the divine understanding ... God knows all future contingencies, that is, God knows all things that shall accidentally happen, or, as we say, by chance; and he knows all the free motions of men's wills that shall be to the end of the world." Charnock, *Existence and Attributes*, 439. Turretin also asserts that "Because the most perfect nature of God demands it; for if the knowledge of future thing is a perfection in creatures, much more will it be so in God. Again, because he is omniscient (which he would not be unless his knowledge extended to all things not only past and present, but also future-contingent as well as necessary.) (a) Because he is the searcher of hearts (*kardiognostes*), which would not be true if he did not most intimately know not only the thoughts, purposes and affection of the heart, but also the propensities and dispositions before their actual execution... (b) Because he is omnipresent-everywhere and intimately present with all his creatures and moving and directing them before they move or direct themselves." Turretin, *Institutes* I, III.XII.XV (210).

⁴¹ Edwards, *The Socinian Creed*, 42.

⁴² Edwards, *The Socinian Creed*, 39-41. cf. Ridgley, *Body of Divinity*, 96-97.

dispositions and inclinations of mens hearts, and consequently all things that depend upon them, all their enterprises and actions, yea even those that are most free and voluntary.⁴³

Therefore, Edwards criticizes Socinian teaching as fundamentally unbiblical, particularly in view of the prophetic nature of the Bible.

Other Reformed writers also commonly refute the Socinians through these scriptural proofs on God's prediction of future events.⁴⁴ For instance, Brakel insists that "this is true for all prophecies, even those which refer to such events which could only come about as a result of the exercise of man's free will." He thus states that all of Scripture exemplifies this and, accordingly, such examples are too numerous to mention all.⁴⁵

Charnock also argues that the Bible claims God's foreknowledge of future contingents because God frequently predicted them and they were actually fulfilled. Charnock insists that unless God infallibly knows future contingent events, He could not certainly foretell them as He frequently does in Scriptures.⁴⁶ Like Edwards and Brakel, Charnock presents several examples from scripture to prove this.⁴⁷

In a similar vein to Charnock, Heidanus states that since God foretold futures, and especially future contingents, and they infallibly became future in the Bible, He certainly foreknows the future events.⁴⁸ He presents many scriptures as proofs such as Genesis 15:13, Deuteronomy 31:16, and 1 Kings 13:2. On the basis of those passages, Heidanus

⁴³ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata I*, 60.

⁴⁴ Muller, *PRRD III*, 402.

⁴⁵ Brakel, *Reasonable Service I*, 104.

⁴⁶ Charnock, *The Existence and Attributes*, 431.

⁴⁷ Charnock, *The Existence and Attributes*, 431-33.

⁴⁸ Abraham Heidanus, *Corpus theologiae christianae in quindecim locos digestum*, vol I, (Leiden: Lugduni Batavorum, 1696), II, 125.

argues that God certainly foreknows the future contingent things and the will of God is the cause of this determinate truth of those events.⁴⁹

Turretin particularly deals with the Socinians' interpretation of these predictions. According to the Socinians, they refer to only probabilities which are based on admonitions. Turretin, however, distinguishes between a prediction and an admonition: a prediction is "simply the narration" of a future event whereas an admonition is "a persuasion" to a virtuous work or "a dissuasion" from the contrary. He argues that even if some predictions result in the persuasion of human beings, as the Socinians insist, it does not necessarily mean that they were not predictions. Moreover, Turretin states that this applies only to certain cases, not to all in Scripture. He then asks why it applies to only some cases but not all. For Turretin, the Socinians cannot provide an appropriate reason for this diversity.⁵⁰ Thus, he firmly claims that God's prophecies certainly imply His knowledge of future events.

Finally, Edwards asserts that God's providence whereby God manages the world for His great and excellent ends shows that God foresees future actions and occurrences in the world. Edwards states that this is why Reformed adversaries try to take away the providence of God as well as the foreknowledge of God.⁵¹ He claims that God's providence "extends itself to this sort of future actions and occurrences." Thus, Edwards asserts that the providence of God proves that divine knowledge includes all futurities.⁵²

Other Reformed scholastics agree with Edwards on this point. For example, Turretin claims that "The decree of providence draws this necessarily after it because as

⁴⁹ "Hinc patet I. futurorum contingentium esse determinatam veritatem, quia Deus ea certo praedicat. Certa enim praedictio nulla, nisi certum sit quoque quod praedicatur. Jamque illius determinatae veritatis causam dedimus, nimirum voluntatem Dei. Quam si non admittis, in mirabilis Labyrinthos incidis." Heidanus, *Corpus theologiae christianae*, II, 125.

⁵⁰ Turretin, *Institutes* I, III.XII.XIV (210).

⁵¹ Edwards, *The Socinian Creed*, 43.

⁵² Edwards, *The Socinian Creed*, 42.

whatever takes place in time, God immutably decreed either to effect or to permit, so he ought infallibly to foreknow it all.”⁵³ Brakel also asserts that God has an infallible knowledge of all future events because they can neither exist nor operate without God’s providence:

Fourthly, nothing exists or comes to pass apart from the operation of God. God sustains everything by His omnipotent and omnipresent power. Nothing can move without divine cooperation and thus everything transpires according to His decree, be it either by the Lord’s initiation or permission, directing things in such a manner that they accomplish His purpose. Thus it becomes evident that the Lord has prior knowledge concerning all things. You will comprehend this with more clarity and be less confused if you keep in mind that God is omniscient and has decreed all that transpires. His knowledge is not derived from existing matters and secondary causes as is true for man.⁵⁴

In conclusion, Edwards is adamant in polemicizing against the Socinians who deny God’s foreknowledge of future contingents. In opposition to them, he firmly argues that God knows all future events with certainty, including the contingent and free effects of creatures. Furthermore, Edwards asserts that God knows these things in such a way as does not undermine the freedom and mutability of human existence.

2. Debates with Whitby

The doctrine of God’s foreknowledge of future contingencies was a significant issue in the controversy between Edwards and Whitby as well. Specifically, the core of the debate concerns the relation between God’s decree and His foreknowledge of future contingent events. In his third discourse of *Four Discourses*, Whitby strongly opposes Edwards’ assertion that God’s foreknowledge depends on His decrees. As already dealt with in chapter 4, Whitby instead claims a contrary argument that God’s decree is grounded in His foresight of future contingencies, not vice versa.

⁵³ Turretin, *Institutes* I, III.XII.XVI (210).

⁵⁴ Brakel, *Reasonable Service*, 104-05.

The reason given by Whitby for the argument of conditional decree is actually related to a more or less traditional concern over the nature and circumstance of human free choice. Whitby asserts that if foreknowledge depends on decree, the freedom of human will to choose or do otherwise is destroyed because nothing can happen differently than it does.⁵⁵ Likewise, he claims that no human beings can do either more good or less evil than they do because it is impossible they should do more good or less evil than God determined they should do.⁵⁶ Consequently, Whitby maintains that Reformed teaching on the precedence of God's decree over His foreknowledge destroys the freedom of human actions.⁵⁷

Concerning this charge, Edwards does not respond to Whitby with detailed argumentations because he already proved how divine decree can be coherently compatible with human freedom in earlier discussions.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, he once again insists that since God decreed human beings shall act voluntarily and contingently without any compulsion or force, "neither the divine foreknowledge, nor predestination do make any human actions good or evil, nor do they lay any necessity upon his actions."⁵⁹ Namely, the divine willing does not destroy the freedom of mankind because God has decreed that contingent things occur contingently and necessary ones do necessarily. Accordingly, human beings' free and voluntary action is "part of the decree" and God's decree or foreknowledge is "no impediment to the liberty of man's will."⁶⁰ For

⁵⁵ Whitby, *Four Discourses*, 39-40.

⁵⁶ Whitby, *Four Discourses*, 38-39. The issue of the problem of evil and sin in the debate between Edwards and Whitby will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

⁵⁷ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 142.

⁵⁸ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 142.

⁵⁹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 141.

⁶⁰ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 142.

Edwards, therefore, Whitby's assertion that Reformed doctrine of divine foreknowledge removes human freedom or future contingencies cannot be validated at all.

In order to disprove Edwards' argument that God's foreknowledge of future contingencies depends on His decree, Whitby also claims that God can foreknow future contingents lying outside of divine willing. He particularly relies on Scripture to support his argument.⁶¹ For example, he mentions the conditional statement in 1 Samuel 23:12, "if David had stayed the night at Keilah, he would have been betrayed." In his discussion of the passage, Whitby claims that such foreknown condition cannot be decreed by God:

[it is] repugnant to divine wisdom to decree that on condition shall be future, which he knows never will be future, and so, according to this assertion, must have decreed before it never should be future; this being a decree to this effect, I will this shall be done upon a condition, which I will shall never come to pass.⁶²

Indeed, according to Whitby, God knows that David would not stay and would not be betrayed without decreeing the condition or willing the contingency.⁶³ For him, consequently, God's knowledge of such conditional contingencies belongs to a third category of divine knowledge.⁶⁴ Even though he does not explicitly mention it, this argument shows that Whitby adopts the doctrine of middle knowledge to develop his

⁶¹ Whitby mentions 1 Samuel 23:12, Jeremiah 38:17, and Matthew 11:21.

⁶² Whitby, *Four Discourses*, 41; Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 142.

⁶³ Whitby, *Four Discourses*, 40-41; Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 142.

⁶⁴ For the Reformed scholastics, two categories of divine knowledge included both all actualization of possibility and every potential existence. Thus, they saw no need of further qualification for divine knowing. However, in order to offer a solution to the problem of human free choice and divine foreknowledge, particularly against Augustinian doctrine of grace and election as employed by Dominicans and Reformers in the sixteenth century, Fonseca and Molina intentionally placed another category of divine knowing, a category lying between God's necessary and voluntary knowledge: the middle knowledge (*scientia media*). Muller, *PRRD III*, 396; 411; 417-19. Subsequently, this concept was advocated by Remonstrants and Socinians. For example, Episcopius states that "Ordo hic ut recte intelligatur, observandum venit, triplicem Deo scientiam tribui solere. Unum quae necessaria est & practica atque simpliciter intelligentis dicitur, quae ex natura sua omni voluntatis liberae actu prior est, quia Deus se ipsum & alia omnia possibile intelligit Alteram liberam, quae visionis dicitur & actu voluntatis liberae posterior est, quia Deus omnia, quae facere aut permittere decrevit, eodem ordine decrevit, quo eo decrevit facere aut pennittere ut fiant. Tertiam, mediam, qua Deus novit quid homines aut angeli pro sua libertate facturi essent, sub conditione, si cum his aut illis circumstantiis, in hoc vel in illa statu aut ordine constituerentur." Simon Episcopius, *Institutiones theologiae in Opera theologica*, vol I. (Amsterdam, 1650), 303.

argument. Edwards also insists that Whitby borrowed this idea from Jesuits such as Vasquez, Molina, Suarez, and Lessius who rely on this text for their doctrine of middle knowledge.⁶⁵

For Edwards, the idea of future contingents lying prior to the will of God was a problem of great importance because its underlying intention is to affirm a synergistic soteriology which the Reformed generally viewed as heterodox. Thus, he strongly criticizes Whitby's argument. First, Edwards claims that God foreknew that the citizens of Keilah would surrender David to Saul if David stayed in Keilah, because God had decreed that if David stayed there, they would do this. Yet, he also argues that God had also decreed that they should not deliver David up, and therefore David was able to flee from Saul. That is, Edwards maintains that David's staying in Keilah was decreed as a mere possibility and his leaving of Keilah was decreed as an actuality.⁶⁶

The same argument is found in Edwards' interpretation of Matthew 11:21. In opposition to Whitby's interpretation of the text, he states as follows:

That God had decreed what should actually be, and likewise what might be conditionally; that is, what might be in case of such and such circumstances: and his foreknowledge was suitable to this decree; that is, he foreknew not only what should really be, but what should happen upon supposition of such circumstances: He decreed the possibility of such events, and no more. It was determin'd that the thing might be, not that it should not be. This latter is a mere hypothetick or conditional futurity, but shall never be made actual.⁶⁷

Edwards, therefore, maintains, by means of his infinite knowledge, Christ knew the possible futurity that the people of Tyre and Sidon would have repented if the same

⁶⁵ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 142. Concerning the seventeenth-century reception of *scientia media*, see also Eef Dekker, *Rijker dan Mida*, 76-84. 102, 232-237; idem. "Does Duns Scotus Need Molina? On Divine Foreknowledge and Co-causality," in *John Duns Scotus (1265/6-1308): Renewal of Philosophy*, edited by E. P. Bos (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998), 101-111; idem, "The Reception of Scotus' Theory of Contingency in Molina and Suarez," in *Via Scoti: Methodologica ad mentem Joannis Duns Scoti: atti del congresso Scotistico Internazionale, Roma, 9-11*, edited by Leonardo Sileo, (Rome: Antonianum, 1995), 445-54; and idem, "Was Arminius a Molinist?", 337-352.

⁶⁶ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 143.

⁶⁷ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 144-45.

miracles had been given to them which were vouchsafed to the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida. However, he insists that Christ knew it as a pure possibility and not as something other than that, because the conversion of Tyre and Sidon through these miracles was not decreed as an actuality by God.⁶⁸

In short, Edwards argues that God does not know conditionals conditionally. Instead, he asserts that God can foreknow future contingent events with certainty – either because He has decreed them as mere possibilities or because He has decreed them as actualities. For Edwards, therefore, future contingencies could neither be construed as sets of foreknown conditions known by God as other than mere possibilities nor yet also known by God prior to God's willing them.⁶⁹ This was what the Reformed denied against the Arminians, even though neither of them denied the divine foreknowledge of future contingency. In this regard, Edwards claims that the passages such as 1 Samuel 23:12 and Matthew 11:21 do not support the theory of middle knowledge and, consequently, the precedence of divine foreknowledge over divine decree.

Here, in order to understand Edwards' position on the issue, it is helpful to compare Edwards' interpretation of the biblical passages such as 1 Samuel 23:12 and Matthew 11:21 with that of other Reformed scholastic thinkers. They basically take the same position as Edwards on the understanding of the passage: they all agree that the conditional statements in these passages do not point toward predictions of future events

⁶⁸ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 144-45.

⁶⁹ For example, Turretin clarifies the issue as "Rather the inquiry relates to contingent conditional future things, which (the condition being posited) can be and not be... The inquiry relates to whether they can be certainly and determinately known antecedently to the decree of God; this we deny... Rather the question is whether a special decree concerning the certain futurity of this or that thing precedes so that God may see that thing antecedently to such a decree (either in itself or in its causes). This they maintain; we deny... Therefore the question is whether besides the natural knowledge (which is only of things possible) and the knowledge of vision (which is only of things future), there may be granted in God a certain third or middle knowledge concerning conditional future things by which God knows what men or angels will freely do without a special decree preceding (if placed with these or those circumstances in such an order of things)." Turretin, *Institutes* I, III.XIII.VII (214).

or hypothetical futures. Rather, they are just pure possibilities and, thus, they are known to God not as actualities or quasi-actualities but as mere possibilities.

For instance, Turretin asserts that the conditional statement, if David had stayed the night at Keilah, he would have been betrayed, does not refer to “a prediction of future things which were still in futurition.” Turretin instead claims that since “in truth both Saul girded himself for the journey, and the people of Keilah were even then secretly plotting to deliver David up to him,” the text was stated to describe not “the act itself as hypothetically future,” but “the purpose and intention” of Saul and the men of Keilah.⁷⁰ To elaborate, prior to David’s decision not to remain there, the betrayal at Keilah is a just pure possibility. And, as a possibility, the betrayal of David, had he stayed the night, is nothing more or less than an unfulfilled intention in the minds of the inhabitants of the village.⁷¹

Like Turretin, Maresius similarly argues that the conditional statement of the text conveys the hidden intention of Saul and the inhabitants of Keilah:

The passages which are brought forth from 1 Samuel 23:11-12, Jeremiah 26:1-2, Ezekiel 2:16, Matthew 11:21 and the like are not serviceable for that middle knowledge; Because in these places, hidden or actual intention of humans are spread out, as first: and indeed for doubtful David concerning the intention of Saul and Keilah in mind toward himself, and for asking whether Saul would be descending over Keilah and the people of keilah would be giving himself to the hands of Saul, God responded they would if you would stay among them, by which David would escape both from descending Saul and from the people of keilah handing over him if he would stay in that place; because in fact both Saul would be preparing himself for the march and Keilah would be handing over David to Saul, they would be pursuing a secret plan already, which in that way God was foreknowing and had decreed to permit, as at the same time had also determined that having been revealed to David, that opportunity of them would be frustrated.⁷²

⁷⁰ Turretin, *Institutes* I, III.XIII.XV (216). Turretin also maintains that, as in the case of Acts 12:6 and 16:27, the words ‘to descend’ and ‘to deliver up’ simply indicate that they had such intention in mind to do this. Ibid.

⁷¹ Turretin, *Institutes* I, III.XIII.XV (216).

⁷² “Nec scientiae illi mediae statuminandae inserviunt quae loca adferuntur ex 1 Samuel XXIII, II. 12. Jerem. XXVI, 2.2. Ezech. II, 16. Matth. XI, 21. iisque analogae; Nam illic, vel occulta panduntur hominum actualia consilia, ut primo: etenim Davidi dubio de consiliis Saulis & Kehilaeorum animo erga se,

Brakel also insists that the betrayal at Keilah is not a conditional future event but no event at all. In a similar vein to Turretin, he claims that the purpose of God's revelation was to let David know the inhabitants of Keilah's determination against David:

Answer: This was not a prediction concerning a future event, but rather a revelation about a current reality which from a human perspective could have resulted in an event which as yet had not occurred. Since God had not decreed this event, however, He consequently knew that it would not occur. David inquires about that which is hidden from him so that he may decide whether to stay or flee. God revealed to him that Saul would come down to Keilah and that the hearts of the men of Keilah were not inclined towards him; therefore, they would determine to deliver David to Saul when he would come down. Saul had already prepared himself accordingly and the hearts of the men of Keilah were already set against him. God revealed this to David, and upon viewing this from a human perspective, he could conclude that it was in his best interest to flee. Since God decreed the ultimate outcome of the event, He also decreed the means which would lead to this outcome. Thus, if one views this text relative to the outcome of events, it follows that God's knowledge concerning the ultimate outcome of events is a result of essential omniscience. It is the result of God's singular and comprehensive knowledge, whereby He is cognizant of every possibility, rather than an imaginary, mediate knowledge by which He would decree in response to the activity of man.⁷³

Consequently, for Edwards and other Reformed scholastic writers such as Turretin, Maresius, and Brakel, the two original categories of God's knowledge, God's necessary knowledge of all possibility and his visionary knowledge of all that he has willed to actualize, are adequate to explain the meaning of the conditional statement in this controversial text.⁷⁴ Namely, the conditional statement, "If David had stayed the

& interroganti num Saul esset descensurus contra Kehilam & Kehilaei ipsum essent dedituri in manum Saulis, supple si inter eos maneret, respondit Deus, quo David arriperet fugam, & Saulem descensurum, & Kehilaeos eum tradituros si isthic subsisteret; quod revera & Saul se accingeret ad iter, & kehilaei de Davide illi tradendo, clancularia jam agitarent consilia, quae sic Deus praesciebat & decreverat permittere, ut simul etiam decrevisset illa frustrari tempestiva eorum refectione ad Davidem." Samuel Maresius, *Collegium theologicum, sive systema breve universae theologiae, comprehensum octodecim disputationibus collegialiter olim habitis in Academia provincali ... a Samuele Maresio* (Groningae, typis Francisci Bronchorstii, 1659), II. xlv, 37-38. Heidegger also states that "Vluntatem vero hanc in semetipso & decreto suo permittente, ex quo connexio inter mansionem Davidis & traditionem Kehilitarum, ex eorum proposito consecuturam necessaria fuit, noverat. Sensus igitur est, si manseris, te tradent, qui novi, eos habere consilium te tradendi." Johann Heinrich Heidegger, *Corpus theologiae christianae ... adeoque sit plenissimum theologiae didacticae, elencticae, moralis et hisoricae systema*, Vol 1, (Zurich, 1700), 86. See also, Maccovius, *Loci communes*, 156.

⁷³ Brakel, *Reasonable Service I*, 107-08.

night at Keilah, he would have been betrayed,” would have to be known by God as mere possibility.⁷⁵ In this case, it would belong under the *scientia necessaria* and would be known as one of two possibilities, each capable of actualization: that is, David stays the night and is betrayed, or David does not stay the night and is not betrayed. However, God decreed that only the latter would be actualized. Thus, David does not stay and is not betrayed is only one actuality. Now, this conditional statement is known by God as an actuality, whereas the other member of the conditional, David staying and being betrayed, as an unwilled and unactualized possibility, is not knowable as actuality. In this case, the actuality of David not staying the night and not being betrayed would belong to the category of *scientia voluntaria*. Accordingly, for Edwards and other Reformed orthodox writers, middle category of divine knowledge is useless because these two possibilities pertain to either necessary or voluntary knowledge and God actualized the world David left and without betrayal.⁷⁶

Nevertheless, unlike Edwards, Turretin and Brakel add a rhetorical perspective to the interpretation of Matthew 11:21. Turretin agrees with Edwards in that Jesus Christ in

⁷⁴ Cf. Cocceius states that “Loca Scripturae, quae a defensoribus hujus vocabuli proferuntur, significant vel id, quod ex divino decreto & ordinatione consequitur, ut, quod de Keilaeis responsum est Davidi: vel, quod Deum crica certas personas deceat operari, si cum oeconomia temporum id conveniat. Ut, quod Christus dixit de Tyro & Sidone, Matth. 11:22. Pronunciantur future sub conditione; sed futuritionem conditionatam, sive veritatem verbi conditionati de future re videt Deus in sua decentia aut in sua ordinatione. ... Videtque eam veritatem no dubie aut medio modo, sed certissime & praesentissime.” Johannes Cocceius, *Summa theologiae ex Scriptura repetita in Opera omnia theologica, exegetica, didactica, polemica, philologic*, vol 7 (Amsterdam, 1701-06), III. X, 34, 172. See also Venema, *Institutes*, 155; Rijssen, *Summa theologiae* (1698), 52; Ridgley, *Body of Divinity*, 96; Maresius, *Collegium theologicum*, II. xliv, 37-38.

⁷⁵ Cf. “Atque notitia Divina de talibus non ad scientiam mediam, sed ad scientiam Dei in se ipso, & consequente decreto pertinet, quia propositiones ejusmodi, uti Divino intellectui objiciuntur, considerantur ut verae, atque ita certo verae, ut, supposito etiam decreto Dei, aliter habere non possint.” Heidegger, *Corpus theologiae*, 86.

⁷⁶ Cf. Turretin states that “Quia scientia naturalis et libera omnia scibilia complectuntur; et Entia non sunt multiplicanda sine necessitate: nihil enim est in rerum natura quod non sit possibile, aut futurum; nec tertium ordinem constituere possunt future conditionata. Nam vel talia sunt ex conditione duntaxat possibili seu potestativa, nunquam tamen eventura, vel ex conditione certo future et decreta: priori modo non egrediuntur naturam possibilium, et pertinent ad scientiam naturalem; posteriori future sunt, et a Deo decreta et ad scientiam liberam spectant.” Turretin, *Institutio* I, 193-94.

this passage does not speak of something which would become determinately future on a certain condition. He, however, states as follows:

For it is a hyperbolic and proverbial kind of speech where Christ (by a comparison odious to the Jews) wishes to exaggerate the contumacy and rebellion of their cities (rendered illustrious by his miracles), which, as the searcher of hearts (*kardiognostes*), he knew to be greater and more obstinate than the wickedness of the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon.⁷⁷

Therefore, Turretin maintains that Christ does not mention the foreknowledge of any future conditional things, but “wishes by using a hyperbole to upbraid the Jews for ingratitude and impenitence greater than that of the Tyrians and Sidonians.” He argues that the same manner of speech is found in other biblical passages such as Luke 19:40 and Ezekiel 3:6.⁷⁸ In this way, Turretin explains that Christ uses the rhetorical device in this passage.

The same interpretation is found in Brakel’s discussion of the text. Brakel states that “The manner of speaking here is hyperbolic, which, rather than being conclusive, merely underscores something by way of overstatement.” That is, through this hyperbolic way of speech, Christ is saying that the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon are not as hardened as those of Korazin and Bethsaida. Thus, Brakel maintains, this statement simply conveys that “God in His omniscience acknowledged the possibility of their conversion.” To support his claim, like Turretin, Brakel maintains that the same manner of speech is used in Luke 19:40.⁷⁹ Despite this slight difference in their approach to the text, however, there is a substantial agreement between Edwards, Turretin and Brakel that the text does not support the doctrine of middle knowledge at all.

Edwards also argues that God’s decree cannot be founded upon His foreknowledge because the contrary claim proposes an ontological absurdity:

⁷⁷ Turretin, *Institutes* I, III.XIII.XVI (217).

⁷⁸ Turretin, *Institutes* I, III.XIII.XVI (217).

⁷⁹ Brakel, *Reasonable Service* I, 109. See also Heidegger, *Corpus theologiae*, 86; Maccovius, *Loci communes*, 156-57.

Indeed there can't be a more sober and rational proposition than this, that therefore God foresees all things, because he hath foreordain'd them, were it only for this one consideration, that God can't foreknow a thing as future, unless he hath will'd it to be so. For it must be own'd that every finite thing is in its own nature merely possible, not future, because if things and their events and issues be future of their own nature, then it would follow that they are by necessity, and that their existence is necessary, which is the property only of the deity. And moreover, there could be no free actions of men, for if they come to pass by the necessity of their nature, the liberty of them is lost. So then the argument is good and valid, God knows all the events that shall happen; that is, he knows them as future and the knowing them as such implies that he hath decreed them for there is no other way whereby they can become future but by the divine predestination.⁸⁰

Indeed, Edwards maintains God foresees future events because he has willed them to be and such events cannot exist prior to his willing. In other words, He knows all actuals according to his voluntary or free knowledge because he has willed them into being.

Edwards insists that no other reason of the futurity of events can be imagined except the will and decree of God from eternity and “consequently the foreknowledge of God necessarily supposes his will and decree.”⁸¹ According to him, therefore, the will and decree of God from eternity is the reason of the futurity and future contingents lying outside of or prior to the general divine willing that actualizes all things are in fact ontologically impossible.⁸² And, for Edwards, this is one of the crucial reasons why the eternal decree cannot be founded on the foresight of future contingents.

In comparison to other Reformed scholastics such as Voetius and Twisse, however, Edwards' discussion of the issue whether future events prior to divine willing is ontologically possible or not is relatively brief. In particular, in order to refute the doctrine of middle knowledge, other Reformed thinkers present more detailed arguments

⁸⁰ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 138-39.

⁸¹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 139. Edwards does not discuss the issue of divine concurrence here to refute Whitby's argument of precedence of God's foreknowledge over His decree. However, Edwards deals with it in detail in his treatment of the problem of evil. Thus, I will discuss Edwards' doctrine of divine concurrence and particularly its relation with human freedom in the next chapter.

⁸² Edwards particularly recommends the readers to consult Twisse' *Vindiciae* for further detailed explanation of this point. Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 139.

on the problem of ontological absurdity of a conditional foresight outside of divine willing in God.

Unlike the Reformed orthodox writers, the advocates of middle knowledge such as Molina and Suarez claim that the conditions standing prior to the contingent event have “some sort of actuality or quasi-actuality” outside of God’s willing.⁸³ For example, Suarez states as follows:

For we say that these future events are not future because they are known by God, but conversely because they are future, or to speak more plainly, supposed that they are future, they are known by God. And therefore we conclude that these truths are known by God in themselves, because the future determination of these causes being supposed, there is already truth in these objects, which God already perceives on account of the infinite perception of his intellect. This truth, however, is not from elsewhere supposed than from the free and future use of the cause itself, which [use] is not supposed to be future from some extrinsically determining cause, but by the intrinsic potency of the nearest cause, with the help or proportionate concurrence of the superior cause.⁸⁴

Whitby also argues that God knows future contingent events standing outside of divine willing.⁸⁵ Thus, even though he does not discuss it in detail, Whitby affirms this alternative view that there can be certain knowledge of future contingent events prior to the divine willing.

As with Edwards, the Reformed writers firmly deny the ontological possibility of foreknown conditions standing outside of the divine willing and, consequently, the

⁸³ Muller, *PRRD III*, 421. In other words, “God knows what will occur contingently upon certain conditions lying outside of his will: these conditions are not mere possibility nor divinely willed actuality, but foreknown conditions, foreknown *as actual* apart from the decree, at least for the sake of stating the contingency.” Muller, *PRRD III*, 421.

⁸⁴ “Diximus enim haec futura non ideo esse futura quia sciuntur a Deo, sed e converso, quia futura sunt, vel ut purius loquamur, supposito quod futura sint, cognosci a Deo; et ideo conclusimus cognosci a Deo has veritates in seipsis, quia, supposita determinatione futura talium causarum, jam est veritas in tali objecto, quam Deus ex infinita perspicacia sui intellectus statim intuetur. Illa autem veritas non aliunde supponitur, quam ex libero usu futuro ipsius causae, qui non supponitur futurus ob aliquam causam extrinsecam determinantem, sed ex intrinseca potestate causae proximae, cum adjutorio seu concursu proportionato causae superioris.” Francisco Suárez, “Opusculum II. De Scientia Dei futurorum contingentium,” in *Opera Omnia XI*, eds. A. Michel & C. Berton (Paris: L. Vives, 1858 [1599]), 338.

⁸⁵ Whitby, *Four Discourses*, 40.

doctrine of middle knowledge. Turretin, for instance, argues that the providence of God disproves the ontological possibility of middle knowledge. He claims that since all the events and acts of mankind fall within the divine providence, “none are independent and indeterminate.” Namely, human action as the second cause depends on God as superior cause. However, according to the doctrine of middle knowledge, free determination of the will for the object depends upon no superior cause. Thus, it would be the first cause or operator which does not depend on God in operation. Turretin however claims that “such a subjection of the created will is evident from the dependence between the first cause and second causes, between the Creator and creatures.”⁸⁶ For him, any finite events cannot exist apart from providence or providential concurrence.⁸⁷ Thus, God cannot have foreknowledge of future contingencies unless He has it as being involved with his providential concurrence.⁸⁸

Like Turretin, on the basis of the argument on God’s providence, Voetius denies the possibility of the existence of future events outside of God’s willing. He states that “For every contingent and free act is subject to the providence of God and nothing can exist or preexist or be future, unless it depends on God both in becoming and being, that

⁸⁶ Turretin, *Institutes I*, III.XIII.XI (215).

⁸⁷ Cf. Pierre Du Moulin, *The Anatomy of Arminianisme: or the Opening of the Controversies lately handled in the low Countries, concerning the Doctrine of Predestination of the Death of Christ, of the Nature of Grace* (London: S. S. for Nathaniel Newbery, 1620), 15-16.

⁸⁸ Cf. Muller states that “The Reformed orthodox enter the discussion with the assumption that God alone is original, self-existent, and necessary and that the entire contingent order depends on God for its existence. Or, to make the point in another way, prior to the act of creation, God alone exists as an actual or actualized being; the created order is simply a series of possibilities or potentialities in the mind of God. Out of all of the possibilities that God knows, God wills to create some. Once created, moreover, the things and actions of the finite order do not become self-existent, but continue to have their existence from God-or, to make the point in Thomistic language, all things have their existence by participation in the being of God. The power of being, self-existence, and potential for the existence of others does not belong in any absolute sense to the created order.” Muller, “Grace, Election, and Contingent Choice,” 266.

is unless it is provided for and predefined by him.”⁸⁹ He thus argues that since the object of this knowledge cannot exist, the doctrine of middle knowledge cannot be approved.⁹⁰

Furthermore, Voetius insists that the objects of middle knowledge can not have any determination of existence either by itself or by something else than God.⁹¹ Voetius maintains that the former option should be dismissed because “nothing undetermined determines itself” and “possible being (or non-being) cannot transcend through itself or from itself into potential being or becoming.”⁹² With respect to the latter, he argues that no other option can be supposed than absurd things like “the Nothing (*nihilum*),” “the chaos of atoms,” “non providence of Epicureans” or “Platonic fortune or fate.”⁹³ Accordingly, Voetius asserts that middle knowledge has no cause for its known object other than God’s willing.⁹⁴

Cocceius also claims that no middle knowledge exists “because there can be no being independent of the divine will.”⁹⁵ In particular, in a similar vein to Voetius, he

⁸⁹ “Actus enim omnes contingentes & liberi subjacent providentiae Dei, & nihil potest existere aut praexistere aut futurum esse, nisi a Deo dependeat tam in fore quam in esse, hoc est nisi ab eo provisum & Praestitutum sit.” Voetius, *Termino vitae*, 49.

⁹⁰ Besides ontological arguments, Voetius makes several other objections to the new invention of middle knowledge. However, it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss all of his arguments in detail. Concerning this, see Voetius, *Termino vitae*, 46-52; idem, *Selectarum disputationum theologicarum*. I, 264-339.

⁹¹ Voetius, *Termino vitae*, 48.

⁹² “Ea enim esset, aut a seipso, aut ab alio aliquo extra se a Deo. Non a seipso, quia nihil indeterminatum determinat seipsum, nihil est causa sui ipsius, & non entis nulla est affectio, nec per se, aut ex se non ens possibile transire potest ad entitatem potentialem seu ad μελλοθαίαν.” Voetius, *Termino vitae*, 49.

⁹³ “Non ab alio, qua tale quid fingi; non potest, & nihil restat, quam ut ad nihilum & chaos atomorum & non providentiam Epicureorum, aut ad fortunam & casum Platonis, quibus cum Deo mundi gubernationem assignat, confugiamus.” Voetius, *Termino vitae*, 49.

⁹⁴ “Si a Deo, in determinatum illud determinari dicatur, jam habemus quod volumus.” Voetius, *Termino vitae*, 49.

⁹⁵ “Non datur scientia media, quia non datur ens independens a divina voluntate.” Johannes Cocceius, *Aphorismi per universam theologiam prolixiores*, in *Opera*, vol. 7, 19.

insists that the futuration of the event outside of God's willing is impossible because it is indifferent by its nature. Concerning this, Cocceius remarks as follows:

Such concept [middle knowledge] is useless in reason and experience. Because a condition, in which man is placed, is not a cause why human behavior is followed; which they wish to be indifferent in their actions: Therefore, so that its act cannot be foreknown. Wherefore that expression, middle knowledge, is more denial of knowledge, than its demonstration. Unless you would say, by the law of fate, the operations of second causes are connected by conditions: of which conscious God of fate would foreknow future, without his own purpose, as Jupiter Homericus balancing μοιραῖς. Afterwards that idea makes man and intelligent creature independent from God in their actions.⁹⁶

Twisse uses the ontological arguments in order to refute the possibility of the foreknown conditions prior to the divine willing as well. Like Voetius, he claims that future contingents can be future either by their own nature or by some cause determining their nature.⁹⁷ However, Twisse asserts that the former option is profoundly dismissed because the nature of future contingent itself is indifferent both towards non-futuration and futuration or both towards existence and non-existence.⁹⁸ That is, Twisse claims that “a contingent event does not have any determination towards the future before it is determined towards existence” insofar it by its nature was possible both to exist and not to exist. Hence, “these future contingents require some external cause by which they

⁹⁶ “Quod vocabulum est cassum mente & sensu. Nam condition, in qua homo ponitur, non est causa, cur sequatur factum hominis; quem volunt in suis actionibus esse indifferentem: ergo nec ut factum ejus praesciatur. Quare illa vox scientia media est potius abnegatio scientiae, quam ejus demonstratio. Nisi dicas, fatali lege operationes causarum secundarum esse conditionibus consertas: cujus fati Deus conscius praesciat futura, sine consilio suo, ut Jupiter Homericus μοιραῖς trutinans. Praeterea facit illa opinio hominem & creaturam intelligentem in actionibus suis independentem a Deo.” Cocceius, *Summa theologiae*, III. X. 33, 172.

⁹⁷ “Ecce demonstratione, sua luce conspicuam, et nullo humano acumine solubilem. Nam vel futura contingentia natura sua future sunt, vel non nisi ex aliqua causa, naturam ipsorum tam ad non futurationem, quam ad futurationem indifferentem determinante, videlicet ad futurationem.” William Twisse, “Praefatio,” in *Dissertatio de scientia media tribus libris absoluta, quorum prior Gabr. Penottum ad partes vocat in suo Libertatis humanae prougnaculo, posteriors duo Fra. Suaresio oppositae sunt, duosque libros ejus de scientia Dei inscriptos refellen dos suscipiunt* (Arnhem: Jacobus a Biesium, 1639), 5.

⁹⁸ Cf. Voetius also argues that because of this indifference, futuration of events becomes uncertain: “Qui probatur creaturam in aliis circumstantiis contrarium certo facturam, cum semper retineat indifferentiam libertatis suae non implicet creaturam in nullis circumstantiis contrarium futuram, ut saepius ante dictum haec ad istam exceptionem...” Voetius. *Selectarum disputationum theologicarum*. I. 333. See also, Turretin, *Institutes I*, III.XIII.IX-XIV (212); Heidanus, *Corpus theologiae christianae*, II, 124.

move from the condition of merely possible things to future ones.”⁹⁹ Twisse however claims that the created cause cannot be the option as well because it is “contingent as well, and therefore likewise undetermined from eternity.”¹⁰⁰

Consequently, another cause is required to explain how the contingent thing is determined to be future and, for Twisse, no other cause can be given than divine will. Twisse therefore argues that only divine will can account for the transition of these events from the state of mere possibility to the condition of being future. In this regard, he claims that without considering God’s will as an extrinsic and eternal cause, these events cannot be ontologically possible.¹⁰¹ Twisse states as follows:

So, everything which is future, is future on account of the divine will, namely because God has decided that they become, that is by working them by himself insofar they are good, but by merely permitting them insofar they are evil, according to that [statement] of Augustine: Nothing happens, unless the Almighty wills it to happen; either allowing it to happen or making it happen himself.¹⁰²

In sum, for Edwards and other Reformed scholastics like Turretin, Voetius, Cocceius, and Twisse, ontological absurdity of future events lying outside of God’s willing or middle knowledge disproves the argument that contingents depending wholly on created free

⁹⁹ Twisse, *Scientia media*, Praefatio, 5.

¹⁰⁰ Concerning this, Twisse argues that “Extra Deum nihil occurrit quod res mere possibilis transire faciat in conditione rerum futurarum. Ratio est quia transitus iste sive migration factae est ab aeterno; nam ab aeterno future errant quaecunque future sunt, alioqui ne a Deo cognosci quidem potuerant tanquam future, idque ab aeterno. . . . At ab aeterno nihil fuit extra Deum, quod transitus istius causa fingi possit, quando quidem extra Deum nihil aderat ab aeterno quod transitum istum causaret.” Twisse, *Scientia media*, Praefatio, 5.

¹⁰¹ Twisse, *Scientia media*, Praefatio, 6. See also, idem, *Discovery*, 338. Turretin takes the similar position: “But no cause of this thing can be imagined except the will of God. There was nothing from eternity which could be the cause of the determination of a thing indifferent to either part except the will of God; not his essence or knowledge, for neither can operate *ad extra* separated from the will. Therefore, as no effect can be understood as future (whether absolutely or hypothetically) without the divine decree (because no creature can be in the world without divine causality), so no future conditional thing can be knowable before the decree.” Turretine, *Institutes* I, III.XIII.X (214).

¹⁰² “Unde conficitur, quaecunque futura sunt ex Dei voluntatem tanquam in causam unice idoneam referatur, scilicet Deus decreverit ut fiant, idque ipso faciente quatenus bona, permittente vero tantummodo quatenus mala juxta illud Augustini: Non aliquid fieri, nisi quod omnipotens fieri velit, vel finendo ut fiat, vel ipse faciendo.” Twisse, *Scientia media*, Praefatio, 6.

choice are conditionally future apart from a divine decision and consequently even foreknown by God as conditionally future.

As with the issue of ontological impossibility, Edwards also points out another fundamental problem in Whitby's position: in order to establish the certainty of conditional foreknowledge of future contingents, Whitby makes future events necessary and destroy human freedom. To elaborate, Edwards argues that future contingents cannot be future by their own nature because "every finite thing is in its own nature merely possible." Thus, these events can be known only as possible, unless there is some external cause that makes them move from mere possibilities to the condition of being future. Edwards holds that only divine will can account for the futurity of future contingent events. However, according to him, Whitby denies this and, consequently, it would result in an absolute necessity of future events.¹⁰³

Taking basically the same position with Edwards, other Reformed orthodox thinkers present more detailed explanations on this matter.¹⁰⁴ For example, Twisse claims that since Suárez denies a determination by the divine will, the only possible alternative for an eternal determination of contingent events is an underlying fate:

unless they perhaps hold that all things, even the most contingent, proceed by some fate; that fate depending either on the influence of the stars, or some hidden and concealed chain of natural causes, just as if it would be constituted by some natural necessity that one part of any contradictory pair of propositions is determinately true and that from eternity, which kind of fate necessarily must bind even Jehovah himself. So, this is the unhappy end of that shameful Jesuit doctrine of middle

¹⁰³ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 138-39.

¹⁰⁴ Concerning this, Muller states that "many of the Reformed, following the arguments of Voetius and Heidanus, saw this view as turning on itself – namely, as introducing a new form of determinism into the universal order: inasmuch as it claimed to discuss future contingents lying outside of the will of God, it introduced into the concept of a world order events and things not caused by God and, in addition, determinative of the divine will itself, moreover, it was the divine will that established all things in their necessity, contingency, or freedom, such events lying outside of the divine will would not only be in some way determinative of God, would not only introduce effects into the divine essence, but would also to the same degree impede the divine establishment of all things in their necessity, contingency, and freedom." Muller, *PRRD* III. 425.

knowledge, that it provides an opportunity for atheism not less premature than manifest.¹⁰⁵

In a similar vein to Edwards, Twisse maintains that the advocates of prevolitional conditional knowledge of future events reject a determination by the first cause. However, as examined already, the second cause alone cannot ensure futuration of the events because it is indifferent in nature. Moreover, a determination of the futuration of events should be made from eternity. Yet, the nature of the second cause is temporal. Suárez and his associates cannot offer any cause by which these events are determined to futuration. According to Twisse, therefore, it only follows that all contingent events become future from eternity by an absolute necessity:

According to Suárez and all advocates of middle knowledge, no tolerable cause can be imagined of this determination, namely by which it is made that these events which are by their nature merely possible and indifferent both to non-futuration as well as to futuration, will become future or determined to futuration. For neither can this determination be reduced to any second cause, for it is made from eternity, no second cause emerging from eternity. But to say that they therefore will be future, because they are future is not to provide a cause of futuration but to commit a mere trifle. However, the Jesuits never admit the first cause as a cause of futuration of things. Therefore, it only remains that all contingent events were determined to futuration from eternity by a natural and absolute necessity that is the highest kind of fatal necessity.¹⁰⁶

Twisse also asserts that middle knowledge does harm to divine freedom by making God subject to Stoic fatalism.¹⁰⁷ According to him, conditional foreknowledge of

¹⁰⁵ “Nisi forte dicatur, omnia etiam quae contingentissima sunt fato quodam fluere, sive ex caeca quadam et recondite causarum naturalium concatenatione, quasi necessitate quadam naturali constitutum esse, ut altera pars cujuscunque contradictionis vera esset determinate idque ab aeterno, cujus generis fatum Jehovah ipsum constringere necesse est. Atque hic est infaustus illius propudiosi Jesuitarum dogmatis exitus, de scientia media; unde pateat aditus in Atheismum, non minus praeceps, quam manifestus. Twisse, *Scientia media*, 252.

¹⁰⁶ “Secundum Suarium omnesque assertores scientiae mediae, nulla vel tolerabilis causa fingi potest determinationis istius, qua scilicet factum est ut res natura sua merè possibles atque indifferentes, tam ad non futurationem, quam ad futurationem evaserint futurae, sive ad futurationem determinatae. Neque enim ista determinatio rejici potest in causam aliquam secundam, cum facta sit ab aeterno, nulla autem causa secunda extiterat ab aeterno. Dicere autem ideo futura esse quia futura sunt, non est futurationis causam reddere, sed meram nugationem remittere. Causam verò prima tanquam futurationis rerum causam nequaquam admittunt Jesuitae. Superest igitur, ut res omnes contingentes ab aeterno determinatae fuerint ad futurationem necessitate naturali atque absoluta, hoc est in summo genere fatali.” Twisse, *Scientia media*, 258.

future events implies that God knows them before his will but cannot change them by his power either. Thus, Twisse claims that God is bound by the chains of fate and the thread of the consequence of things which he cannot hold back.¹⁰⁸

Similar argument with Twisse is found in Abraham Heidanus' writing. Heidanus insists that Jesuits' notion of conditional foreknowledge impinges on the freedom of God because God cannot freely choose until something is imposed outside of Himself:

Unless therefore God would have decreed such connections, nothing would have happened, because no connection is in such kinds from the nature of thing. Therefore the will of God is determined from eternity to all willing and unwilling. Otherwise God would borrow all knowledge from things themselves, and in such a way the idea of God would come to him from elsewhere. ... In such a way thing having been known objectively restricts knowing of God and God should necessarily have things beyond himself before He consults, whether it is agreeable that this would happen or not. He could not decide anything until the wise things themselves would give a resolution. And the wise connection between fire and heat, between snow and whiteness would determine the wisdom of God.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ "Admirandam itaque necessitatem invehunt isti, quantam vix Stoici unquam excogitarunt, qua Iovem ipsum constringerent. Huc redit doctrina Jesuitarum de altera parte contradictionis etiam in futuris contingentibus determinatè vera, seclusa divinae voluntatis determinatione. Ergo inquam hujus contradictionis Mundus vel erit, vel non, pars altera vera fuit determinatè idque ab aeterno, seclusa voluntate Dei, ergo necesse fuit, ut mundus fieret; pari ratione necesse fuit ut omnia evenirent eo modo quo eveniunt, nec fieri potuit ut consilio Dei aliter ordinarentur omnia, quàm ordinata sunt, et proinde necessitati isti Stoicissimae subjecta est universa voluntas Dei." Twisse, *Scientia media*, 465.

¹⁰⁸ Twisse states that "Nam altera pars futurorum contingentium, juxta istos Theologos est ab omni aeternitate, determinatè vera, idque ante omne decretum voluntatis divinae. Ad haec, quomodo fieri potest, ut ad istam praescientiam requiratur decretum permittendi, cum quicquid Deus ipse aut liberè facturus sit, aut liberè permissurus, sit jam Deo notum ante omne decretum de re aliqua aut facienda, aut permittenda, quemadmodum philosophatur, Franciscus Suarius: cum etiam mundum ipsum futurum esse a Deo notum fuisse scribat, ante omne decretu divinum de mundo fabricando. Ex quo fatum plusquam Stoicum introducit, aut faltem Stoicissimum, quod Deum ipsum constringat. Etiam manifesto sequitur, quicquid sit, fieri necessariò, etiam liberrimos actus non modo creaturarum rationalium, sed et ipsius Dei creatoris omnium idque necessitate, non à libera Dei voluntate profecta, sed extra Deum reperta, hoc est plusquam necessitate naturae. Omnis enim naturae necessitas à libera Dei voluntate profecta esse dignoscitur. At ista necessitas extra Deum originem suam repetens, in Deum ipsum introducit." William Twisse, *Vindiciae gratiae, potestatis, ac providentiae Dei: hoc est, ad examen libelli Perkinsiani de praedestinationis modo et ordine, institutum a Iacobo Arminio* (Amsterdam: J. Janssonius, 1632), III.errat.4, 683.

¹⁰⁹ "Nisi ergo Deus decrevisset tales connexiones, nihil factum fuisset, quia ex natura rei nulla est connexio in talibus. Ergo voluntas Dei determinate est ab aeterno ad omne volibile & nolibile. Alias Deus ex rebus ipsis mutaretur omnem cognitionem, & sic Dei idea adveniret ei aliunde. ... Sic res scitae objective terminarent cognitionem Dei, & necesse haberet Deus res extra se prius consulere, an hoc conveniens factus esset, vel non. Nec posset peremptorie aliquid decernere, donec res ipsae darent sapiens Consilium. Et sapiens connexio inter ignem & calorem, nivem & alborem determinaret Dei Sapientiam." Heidanus, *Corpus theologiae christianae*, II, 124.

Heidanus, therefore, asserts that the conditional foreknowledge of future contingent lying prior to God's decision introduce Stoic fate and even decrees of God is bound by this natural necessity.¹¹⁰

Like Twisse and Heidanus, Voetius also claims that the theory of conditional foreknowledge of future events or middle knowledge removes the freedom of God:

Therefore this having been supposed, God knew before His own decree which order of thing He would be electing. Therefore He could not choose another order of thing. And if order of circumstances is certain before divine decree, now condition having been removed before all decree, it is also certain absolute futurition of all such, which are spoken of future condition. Therefore God or rational creatures could not dispose otherwise than things have been disposed; and things could not be done other than they are: and through indeed absolute power God will not be able to act so that they may not exist, or as they may be otherwise.¹¹¹

Indeed, for Voetius, on account of this absolute necessity, it was not possible for God not to have that decision.¹¹² Therefore, like Twisse, he argues that the notion of middle knowledge results in absolute fatalism:

Seventh, another even greater absurdity follows: namely a more than Stoic fate, which inevitably constricts not merely the creature, but even God. For neither is it possible for the creature in time not to act here and so, nor is it possible for God to foreknow or will otherwise than that and how it is future. For every future contingent will be true, both natural and free ones, before God knows or wills it in such a way

¹¹⁰ "Hoc vero est Fatum Stoicum introducere. Nam si singula a se ipsis ad futuritionem determinata sunt, nec sunt natura sua indifferentia tam ad non futuritionem quam ad futuritionem: tum sequitur, omnia provenire naturali necessitate, etiam ipsa decreta Dei." Heidanus, *Corpus theologiae*, 124.

¹¹¹ "Hoc igitur supposito, scivit Deus ante decretum suum quem ipse rerum ordinem electurus esset. Non potuit igitur alium eligere. Et si ordo circumstantiarum certus ante decretum divinum, jam ablata conditione ante omne decretum certa quoque est absoluta futuritio omnium istorum, quae dicuntur sub conditione future. Non potuerunt igitur Deus vel creaturae rationales aliter dispoere res suas quam dispositae sunt; nec res ipsae aliter fieri possunt, quam sunt: neque per absolutam quidem potestatem Deus poterit efficere, ut non sint, vel ut aliter sint." Voetius. *Selectarum disputationum theologicarum*. I. 332. Voetius also comments that the idea of middle knowledge destroys the contingency of the second causes: "Vult enim futura illa contingentia conditionata transire in statum absolutae futuritionis tantum per actum voluntatis divinae approbationem, si bona sint, aut permissionem, si mala & istis actibus illa, ut absolute future, a Deo cognosci. Quo nihil dici potuit ad stolidum Fatum introducendum accommodatius. Si enim hoc tantum Deus facit ad absolutam eorum futuritionem: ergo jam sunt absolute futura ante omnem divinae voluntatis actum, quem certam determinatamque futuritionem tribuat. Consequentia patet, quia approbationem in bonis, aut permissionem in malis, non tribuit contingentibus ullam, nedum absolutam futuritionem." Ibid., 333.

¹¹² Voetius, *Termino vitae*, 50.

that his absolute power could not effect that it was not or was otherwise. And this simply unconditional necessity (namely with respect to the existence of the thing) removes all freedom in God, and prescribes an inevitable and immutable end of life. This futuration of things or future essence (which is without and outside this freedom) so strictly necessitates, constricts and determines his freedom that it cannot free itself in any way.¹¹³

In a word, Voetius maintains that the advocates of middle knowledge only can affirm futuration lying prior to divine decision by introducing Stoic fate.¹¹⁴ Consequently, for Edwards and other Reformed scholastic thinkers, the attempt to gain freedom through the idea of conditional foreknowledge of future events at the expense of the divine causality either results in an ontological impossibility or ends up in an absolute fatalism.

Besides ontological issues, Edwards maintains that the eternal nature of God's knowledge proves his argument. Namely, since God has knowledge of all things from eternity, Whitby's argument that God's decree depends on His foreknowledge of future events cannot be accepted:

¹¹³ “Septimo: Sequitur et aliud logice absurdum, absurdissimum fatum scilicet plus quam Stoicum, cui creatura non tantum, sed et Deus inevitabiliter implicatur. Creaturae enim in tempore non potest non hoc et sic agere, nec Deus potest aliud praescire aut velle quam illud quod et sicuti futurum est. Verum enim erit omne futurum contingens, tum naturale tum liberum antequam Deus cognovit aut voluit: adeo ut absoluta potestate sua non potuerit efficere ut non esset, aut aliter esset. Et haec necessitas simpliciter absoluta (quoad rei existentiam scilicet) Deo omnem libertatem aufert, et inevitabili atque immutabili termino circumscibit. Haec rerum futurity seu essentia futura, (quae absque illo et extra illum est) tam arcte illum necessitat, constringit ac determinat, ut nullo modo extricare se possit. Voetius, *Termino vitae*, 50. He also comments that “Erit aliqua catena inevitabilis necessitates, quam Deus non fabricavit, quam ipse manu non tenet, quam e coelo non dimittit, ut pro summa libertate sua creaturas omnes trahat et pertrahatad eventus, quo ipsi visum fuerit; sed qua ipse trahitur et decreat ejus de coelo deducuntur, quo scilicet fata contingentium et fortuitorum viam inveniunt, quotiescunque indeterminabilis illorum determinatio in alterutram contradictionis partem ceciderit, et conditionatam suspensam, ac fluidam Dei scientiam ita fixaverit, ut tandem secundum illam scientiam absolute quid velle ac statuere posit. Ita scilicet Deus non erit Deus et Dominus absolutus qui quae vult facit, Psal. 115, sed hypotheticus et conditionibus circumscriptus. Non erit summa libertas, sed infirma post libertates et contingentias omnem inferiorum demum imperans et decernens; consilium ejus non stabit, Is.46, nisi hominis appetitu πολυτροπω et πολυστροφος fulciri contigerit, et atomi cujusque mundi contingentiae liberae motus aliquis exierit κατά παρένκλιν.” Voetius, *Termino vitae*, 56.

¹¹⁴ Voetius, *Termino vitae*, 50. It was a common position held by other Reformed thinkers as well. Muller, *PRRD III*, 425. Cf. Van Til remarks that “Imo qui futurationem ante Dei decretum statuunt, fatum Stoicum introducunt, sc.” Salomon Van Til, *Theologiae utriusque compendium cum naturalist um revelatae* (leiden: Samuel Luchtmans, 1719), I/I, I.iv. 3, 41; “Deinde, si scientia media omni decreto Dei sit prior, seseque ad nexus rerum non necessarios extendat, imprudentes videntur fatum & necessitatem “Stoicam introducere, qui illius authores sunt.” Franco Burgersdijk, *Institutionum metaphysicarum, lib. II*. (London: J. Crook & J. Baker, 1653), II. viii. 18, 289; “Ergo omnia Fato fiunt.” Heidanus, *Corpus theologiae*, 125.

Which shews how absurd it is to assert, that God decreed to save such and such men, if they believe and repent, meaning by this, that he knew it not certainly; whereas they cannot believe and repent without him, and consequently he must know it, because his knowledge is not successive but is from eternity. And then to assert, that God knew from eternity that they would believe and repent without fail, and yet to say that he decreed this conditionally, is irrational and absurd.¹¹⁵

For Edwards, on account of the eternity of divine foreknowledge, future contingent events must be known with certainty from eternity. Accordingly, God cannot know conditionals conditionally, and only divine willing as an eternal cause can account for the eternal nature of divine foreknowledge.¹¹⁶

Edwards also refutes Whitby's idea of conditional foreknowledge of future events since it is an uncertain knowledge which is based on mere suppositions.¹¹⁷ Specifically, he asserts that it cannot be attributed to God because "It is built only on suppositions which are uncertain and precarious, and we must go a great way about for them; for it seems there is no knowledge of the things, unless some other thing happens, which likewise depends upon the happening of another, and that upon a third, and so on."¹¹⁸ Moreover, Edwards insists that in order to preserve genuine conditionality, one would have to assume that God's knowledge is limited. In other words, for God to know the conditional conditionally, God would have to be ignorant of its resolution in actuality.

¹¹⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 90.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Twisse states that "Extra Deum nihil occurrit quod res mere possibilis transire faciat in conditione rerum futurarum. Ratio est quia transitus iste sive migration factae est ab aeterno; nam ab aeterno future errant quaecunque future sunt, alioqui ne a Deo cognosci quidem potuerant tanquam future, idque ab aeterno. ... At ab aeterno nihil fuit extra Deum, quod transitus istius causa fingi possit, quando quidem extra Deum nihil aderat ab aeterno quod transitum istum causaret." Twisse, *Scientia meida*, *Praefatio*, 5.

¹¹⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 89-90. Brakel similarly maintains that "First, if God had such a mediate knowledge, all knowledge of God relative to the actions of men would be fraught with uncertainty and mere assumptions. Even if every imaginable circumstance needed to induce man to a certain action would be brought into play, man, in their opinion, would still be free to do as he pleased. They reason that man would not be limited by a necessary cause, and thus it would be uncertain what he would do. Consequently, God's knowledge relative to such actions would be of a contingent nature. Far be it from us to entertain such a notion concerning an omniscient God!" Brakel, *Reasonable Service*, 106. See also Turretin, *Institutes I*, III.XIII.XII (215); Voetius, *Termino vitae*, 48-50.

¹¹⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 89.

For him, this results in uncertainty in God himself. Thus, Edwards asserts that Whitby's argument of foreknowledge on bare suppositions consequently impinges on divine omniscience: "There are no ifs, where there is a certain knowledge, and therefore those men who talk of a knowledge upon supposition only, impeach God of ignorance, or at least of a degree of it."¹¹⁹

Finally, Edwards turns to the testimonies of the Fathers to support his view on the relation between God's decree and foreknowledge. He cites Origen, Eusebius, Hilary, Jerome, Augustine, Prosper, and Fulgentius.¹²⁰ Edwards also argues that Aquinas and Scotus agree with him, although they differ with each other in many other points. To prove his argument, Edwards particularly cites Diego Alvarez (1550-1635) who states that "this is the opinion of Thomas and all the Thomists, and Scotus, Vega, and the holy Fathers."¹²¹ In addition to his theological predecessors, Edwards even relies on his contemporary philosophers such as Descartes and Malebranche by arguing that they teach the same thing that Edwards himself does.¹²² In this way, by quoting many figures from the Church Fathers to his contemporary continental philosophers, Edwards tries to refute Whitby and his associates on the relation between decree and foreknowledge, and to support his claim that God's foresight and precognition are founded in His predetermination and fore-ordaining.

In conclusion, on the basis of all these arguments, Edwards once again firmly asserts that God's foreknowledge does not precede His decree of future events. He remarks:

I conclude then, that the omniscient God foreknew all futurities, even the most contingent, because they were determin'd from eternity by his decree... Thus it is

¹¹⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 90.

¹²⁰ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 146-148.

¹²¹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 148-49.

¹²² Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 149.

manifest that the divine prescience depends on the eternal decree; and God did not decree things because he foresaw them, but he foresaw them because he decreed them.¹²³

III. Criticism of Previous Scholarship on the Issue

Finally, the study of Edwards' understanding of divine foreknowledge of future contingencies helps us challenge previous misunderstandings on the orthodox doctrine of free choice. As examined in chapter 1, it has been argued by many scholars that Reformed doctrine of foreknowledge leads to fatalism. More specifically, critics of Reformed theology argue this because if God infallibly knows the entire future, then it looks as if nothing can happen differently than it does. If so, and if human freedom requires the ability of the will to choose or do otherwise, it appears that human beings do not have freedom of choice by their will.

However, the reading of Edwards' discussion of the subject points toward a different conclusion because of the following reasons: First of all, Edwards teaches that God infallibly foreknows future events. However, in Edwards' view, divine foreknowledge does not lead to any necessity of compulsion to human beings because God not only foreknows the events itself, but also foreknows the mode of the events, whether necessary or contingent. In other words, God foreknows that they would happen in this or that way, namely some necessarily, others contingently and freely. Therefore, the contingency of future events is warranted by the fact that God foreknows contingents as contingents. (If God wills that an event occur contingently, God knows with certainty that the event is contingent) Hence, in spite of God's determination and His foreknowledge, the will of mankind still can function freely and voluntarily without any coercion in Edwards' theology.

¹²³ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 145. This is the traditional Reformed orthodox position on the issue. Cf. *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, 37; Turretin, *Institutes I*, VI.III.1- XIX (316-19); Brakel, *Reasonable Services I*, 198-209; Gill, *The Cause of God and Truth*, 202; William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, trans. John Dykstra Eusden (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997 [1629]), 153.

Second, in his discussion of divine foreknowledge, Edwards once again maintains that one and the same thing or event can be both contingent and necessary. That is, for Edwards, an event or thing that is necessary with respect to God as the first cause can be contingent with respect to the secondary causes. Thus, he maintains that God can infallibly foresee future contingent events because they are determined and certain with regard to the first cause. However, Edwards also claims that our wills are still placed among the causes of things because future contingent events are undetermined and contingent with respect to the second causes. In this regard, human action as a secondary cause is still contingent despite divine foreknowledge. Thus, in Edwards' thought, the Reformed doctrine of foreknowledge does not make human beings passive pawns or senseless stocks.

In sum, previous scholarship's criticism does not fit into the case of Edwards at all because there is no evidence that Edwards' doctrine of God's foreknowledge conduces to metaphysical or philosophical determinism. Rather, we can see in Edwards' and other Reformed thinkers' writings that human freedom or future contingency is still maintained notwithstanding the immutable and infallible foreknowledge of God. Therefore, the reading of Edwards defies the myth that Reformed doctrine of divine foreknowledge results in such fatalistic conclusion.

IV. Conclusion

Edwards follows the standard medieval and Reformed distinction between two categories of divine knowing; the *scientia simplicis intelligentia* or *scientia necessaria* and the *scientia voluntaria* or *scientia libera*. In his discussion of the knowledge of God, Edwards' understanding of God's foreknowledge is significant for this study. In particular, Edwards argues a traditional view of divine foreknowledge against his enemies such as the Socinians and Arminians.

First, Edwards firmly refutes the Socinians' claims of divine incertitude of future contingencies. In opposition to the Socinians who insist on the absolute freedom of future contingencies, he claims that even though future contingent events are merely contingent with respect to the second causes, they are determined and certain with regards to the first cause. Therefore, Edwards argues that God can infallibly know future contingent events.

Edwards, moreover, maintains that God's determination as the first cause does not destroy human free choice. He asserts that since God knows not only the event itself but also the mode of the event, God foreknows contingent events as contingent or necessary ones as necessary. Thus, Edwards insists that in spite of God's foreknowledge, the will of mankind still can function freely and voluntarily without any compulsion.

Edwards also advocates the Reformed view of God's foreknowledge of future contingencies through the argument of divine perfection and providence. Furthermore, by presenting a series of scriptural proofs, particularly those which refer to God's prediction of contingent events in the future, he maintains that God infallibly possesses foreknowledge of future contingent events.

The doctrine of God's foreknowledge of future contingencies was one of the critical issues in the debate between Edwards and Whitby as well. Whitby claims that God's decree depends on His foreknowledge of future contingencies. In order to prove this, Whitby especially claims that God can foreknow future conditionals standing prior to His willing. However, Edwards vehemently refutes Whitby by showing that God can foreknow future contingent events with certainty either because He has decreed them as mere possibilities or because He has decreed them as actualities. For Edwards, therefore, future contingencies could neither be construed as sets of foreknown conditions known by God as other than mere possibilities nor yet also known by God prior to God's willing them.

Edwards also strongly opposes Whitby's notion of a divine foreknowledge of future contingents lying outside of the divine willing of actuality because this concept

proposes an ontological absurdity. He maintains God foresees future events because He has willed them to be and such events cannot exist outside of His willing. Thus, God cannot know how things will occur apart from his willing them to be. Consequently, for Edwards, this proves that the foreknowledge of free and contingent actions and their futurity depend upon the divine decree, and not vice versa.

Furthermore, Edwards argues that God's decree cannot be founded upon His foreknowledge because future contingent events are known to God from eternity. That is, due to the eternal nature of God's foreknowledge, God cannot know conditionals conditionally, and divine willing should be the only reason for the futurity of contingent events. Edwards also refutes Whitby's idea of conditional foreknowledge of future events since there can be no certainty in the knowledge of futurities upon bare suppositions, which may be, or may not be. In addition to these theological and philosophical arguments, Edwards lastly relies on many historic figures from the Church Fathers to his contemporary continental philosophers to support his argument. Upon the basis of their testimonies, Edwards insists that God foresees future events because God decreed them from eternity.

Finally, Edwards thought does not conform to previous deterministic interpretation of the relation between God's foreknowledge and human freedom because human freedom or future contingency is still maintained by Edwards with respect to the infallible foreknowledge of God. In his understanding, therefore, the Reformed doctrine of divine foreknowledge does not lead to Stoic fatalism or metaphysical determinism.

Chapter 6: Edwards on Providence, the Cause of Sin, and Human Freedom

I. Edwards on the Nature of Providence and Human Freedom

1. Existence of God, Divine Attributes, and Providence

Edwards devotes a large section in *Theologia Reformata* I to the discussion of the providence of God.¹ He opens his discourse with the discussion of the relation between God's existence, His attributes, and His providence. For Edwards, providence cannot be understood apart from God's existence and attributes.

First, Edwards discusses the relation between the existence of God and divine providence. He states that to become a true believer, one must first understand two things: (1) there is a God, and (2) God takes care of his worshippers, giving rewards or punishments according to the behavior of men in the world. Edwards then argues that the latter is based on the former because if the first proposition is true, the second is necessary. That is, the belief in God's existence infers that "he takes care of the world, that he punishes evil doers, and that he recompenses those that seek him." Thus, he claims that if God exists, a providential care of the universe must be concluded thence.²

Second, Edwards similarly insists upon a clear connection between God's attributes and His providence. He argues that God governs and influences the world by the diverse attributes of his Godhead. For example, Edwards states that "God sees and discerns all things that are said and done in every place of the world and hath perfect

¹ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 140-280. Edwards' treatment of providence comes right after the discussion of God's existence and His attributes. Concerning this, Edwards remarks that "having asserted a God and explained his attributes, we naturally fall into the consideration of his providence." Ibid., 140. However, most of Edwards' discussion in the section consists of the proofs of providence, the scope of providence, and the application of the lessons of providence to mankind. Interestingly, while he deals with the scope of the divine providence, Edwards deviates from the discussion of providence and elaborates on the doctrine of good and evil angels in detail. Nevertheless, a detailed examination of the whole issue is beyond the scope of this study. I will focus only on Edwards' teachings which directly relate to the current issue of the relation between divine sovereignty and human freedom.

² Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 140.

insight into all mens thoughts and intentions by means of his infinite knowledge.”

Therefore, it follows that God cannot but be able to care for and govern everything in heaven and on earth with unspeakable wisdom and prudence.³ He also mentions the relation between God’s power, justice and His providence to show that God’s nature determines the character and extent of his providential activity.⁴ Edwards, accordingly, asserts that since God’s providential activity flows from His very attributes, those who deny the providence of God deny His attributes as well.⁵

Consequently, Edwards’ attempt to tie God’s existence and attributes to divine providence provides us with sufficient reason to conclude that the divine existence and attributes are what necessarily constitute the starting point of providence, from which God continually cares for and rules His creation. In short, for Edwards, divine providence is a necessary corollary of the existence of God and His attributes.

2. The Distinct Parts of Providence

Edwards teaches that providence is distinguished into either an internal or external part which parallels the traditional distinction, found in Turretin and others, between eternal and actual providence. As to divine providence as internal acts, he maintains that it involves two things: foresight and decree. First, Edwards claims that since it is “a perceiving and discerning of some future things” before they are actualized in time, God’s providence comprehends foresight as “the first and principal act of providence.” To support his argument, he studies the root of the term providence in major

³ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 140.

⁴ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 141. However, Edwards teaches that while divine attributes are so many single excellencies of the deity,” providence is “the joint exertment of them all in his dealings towards his creatures.” Ibid.

⁵ Edwards also argues that “he who owns the divine providence cannot reject the doctrine of the decrees.” Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 167.

languages, such as Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. According to his examination, they take the name of providence from the word which means foreseeing.⁶

Here, Edwards reaffirms the complete foreknowledge of God: Unlike men and angels, God, who owns an infinite and immense nature, possesses a foreknowledge of “all things, persons and actions that shall ever be through the several ages of the world.” Thus, he argues that the absolute foreknowledge of future events is the very basis of the government of the world. In other words, Edwards claims that God who foresees all things must rule and administer them with incomparable wisdom and knowledge.⁷ Accordingly, Edwards maintains that the denomination of providence was derived from “God’s precognition or foresight.” Nevertheless, he also claims that since the words of knowledge imply the involvement of the will, the Greek term “προβλεπειν” signifies not only to foresee but to “provide for.”⁸

Second, Edwards asserts, the Greek word “προνοια” which indicates divine providence implies the decree and determination of God, namely, what has been traditionally identified as the “general decree” of God. He states that God not only foreknows things but also wisely decrees them.⁹ Thus, Edwards insists that God duly and fitly administers all things by His will and counsel. Concerning the relation between the two, however, Edwards reaffirms that God’s decree precedes foreknowledge, and the former is the foundation of the latter. On the basis of these understandings, Edwards defines providence as internal acts as follows:

Providence is God’s determining according to his good will and pleasure, what shall be the event of his creatures. It is no other than that eternal, free and immutable

⁶ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 141. Edwards mentions “Hashgachah,” which means *praevidit* for Hebrew, “προνοια” which indicates *ante mente percipere*, or *praevidere* for Greek, and *Providentia* for Latin. Ibid.

⁷ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 141.

⁸ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 141.

⁹ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 141.

decree, whereby whatever is good is effectually brought to pass, and whatever is evil is permitted, and whereby both are directed to God's glory.¹⁰

Next, Edwards teaches that providence is to be considered as an external act. He defines it as "God's actual administering of things according to his foreknowledge and will." Edwards further explains it as follows:

Words of knowledge are usually extended not only to the will and affections, but to actions: and thus the word providence doth denote God's actual providing for his creatures, his wise managing of all things for them, according to the tenour of his eternal decree and counsel.¹¹

Indeed, for Edwards, actual providence is the manifestation of divine power in time to realize his will. Consequently, he insists that providence is "not only intuitive and cognoscitive, and not only decretive from eternity, but it is executive in time."¹²

Edwards further distinguishes this actual providence into two different kinds: (1) preserving and (2) governing of all things.¹³ First, Edwards insists, the preservation indicates "The almighty power which made all things, doth preserve and uphold them." Edwards states that creatures are not able to keep their existence, unless sustained "by an extraordinary hand." That is, all created things cannot exist without God because they cannot continue and subsist "without the same aid and power."¹⁴ He claims that God is the only being which exists by itself and does not depend on anything for his existence.¹⁵

¹⁰ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 141.

¹¹ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 141. Cf. Wollebius defines actual providence in distinction from eternal providence as "Actualis Dei Providentia est, qua Deus non solum creaturas suas conservat, sed pro immensa sapientia, bonitate, potentia, justitia & misericordia, omnia gubernat." Johannes Wollebius, *Compendium theologiae christianae* (Amsterdam, 1650), 60.

¹² Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 141.

¹³ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 141.

¹⁴ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 143.

¹⁵ Edwards also maintains that "He is from himself, and is the first cause of all, and therefore all other causes depend upon him, and are governed by him." Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 140.

Thus, Edwards maintains that all creatures require continuous divine maintenance for their existence.¹⁶

Accordingly, for Edwards, creation brings forth existence, while preservation is persistence in existence. He, however, teaches that God's creation cannot be wholly distinct from His conservation. Rather, the former is included in the latter. In this regard, Edwards describes divine conservation as a "continued creation."¹⁷ Thus, Edwards asserts that even though God's work of preserving needs to be distinguished from that of creation, they are inseparable.¹⁸

The second external act of providence in Edwards' understanding of providence is the concept of government. It specifically has to do with the direction, purpose, and goal that God assigns to each component of creation and to the whole of history. He insists that "God upholds the things that he made, that he may dispose of them, and manage them as he pleases." In particular, the cosmos and mankind have been created and are sustained for the glory of God. Edwards, therefore, defines the government as God's disposition of all things according to the counsel of his own will, and his infallible directions of all creatures "to the best ends, the chief and ultimate of which is his own glory."¹⁹ In sum, Edwards maintains that the triune God, in goodness and power, is

¹⁶ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 142.

¹⁷ "But even here in we may be satisfied that in conservation is included a creation, for, as the Schoolmen say, and not amiss, it is a continued creation." Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 142. Following the medieval scholastics who assert that creation and conservation are one eternal act of God by which God brings things into existence and conserves them in being, many Reformed scholastics teach that providence is the continuation of creation (*continuata creatio*). For example, Heidegger states that "Conservatio continuata quaedam creation Dei activa est. ... Si enim creatio & conservatio Dei actiones distinctae forent, creation primo cessaret, ac tum conservatio, vel eodem, quo creatio cessavit, vel sequente momento inciperet. At nequit eodem momento incipere, quia cum creatio respectu Dei momentanea sit, eodem momento res creari & conservari non potest. Non sequente, quia cum duo inter momenta tempus intercedat, medio illo tempore res nec crearetur, nec conservaretur. Sicut ergo creatio aeterna & efficax Dei jussio, ut res existat: ita conservation eadem Dei jussio est, ut res porro existat." Heidegger, *Medulla Theologiae Christianae*, 153. Cf. Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 257-58.

¹⁸ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 142.

¹⁹ Accordingly, Edwards states that "the grand end of God's providence is his own honour and glory." Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 143.

present preserving, accompanying, and guiding the entire universe toward God's highest will for it.

Meanwhile, Edwards' distinction of actual providence shows a little difference from other Reformed theologians because they have traditionally adopted a threefold work of divine providence encompassing God's conservation of creation, His concurrence with all created things, and His direction and guidance of all things toward God's ultimate purposes and their highest good.²⁰ For instance, Braunius states that "actual providence is distinguished into three kinds: (1) it preserves all things in their own being and duration, (2) it moves all things concurring to their actions, not indeed, preconcuring to them, and (3) it governs and rules all things to the best end; to which are fixed from eternity."²¹ This concept has been accepted and defended by many Reformed theologians. However, unlike other Reformed thinkers, Edwards does not include the category of *concursus* (concurrence) in his distinction concerning actual providence.

Nevertheless, it does not mean that Edwards' doctrine of providence deviates from the traditional Reformed position. Some Reformed thinkers such as Heidegger, Altingius and Maresius also make a twofold distinction like Edwards. For example, Heidegger states that "actual providence consists of two kinds, conservation and government."²² Altingius, assigning concurrence to government, distinguishes actual

²⁰ Hepppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 256; Muller, *Dictionary*, 252; Benjamin Wirt Farley, *The Providence of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 185.

²¹ "Actus providentiae sunt tres. I Omnia in suo esse & duratione conservat. II. Omnia movet, ad eorum actiones concurrando, immo praecurrando. III. Omnia gubernat & regit, ad optatum finem, ad quem ab aeterno destinata sunt." Johannes Braunius, *Doctrina Foederum sive Systema Theologiae didacticae et elencticae* (Amsterdam, 1691), 189.

²² "Providentiae actus duo sunt, conservatio & gubernatio." Heidegger, *Medulla Theologiae Christianae*, 152.

providence into preservation and government.²³ The same approach is also found in Maresius.²⁴

Moreover, even though Edwards does not make a threefold distinction, he substantially discusses the concept of concurrence in his treatment of actual providence, especially in his debate with Whitby.²⁵ Here and there, Edwards clearly acknowledges concurrence as divine work to the support of the operations, or activities and actions, of contingent beings in actual providence.

3. The Extent and Universality of Providence

Edwards teaches that God maintains and governs His entire universe. From the starry sky to the earth, God is at work sustaining and leading his creation.²⁶ Not only does God maintain the cosmos at large, but God also preserves and upholds all life teeming with it, including human beings and all beasts.²⁷ For example, Edwards mentions the affairs of mankind such as man's birth and lot in life, the outward successes and failures of men's live, and the exposure and punishment of the wicked.²⁸ He even teaches God's providential control over both good and evil angels.²⁹

Edwards also teaches God's providence over things seemingly small or insignificant. Quoting Matthew 6:25-34 and 10:29, he claims that providence "reaches to the smallest and vilest things." Edwards refers to time as an example of this: "the divine

²³ "Forma duobus actibus describitur, conservatione & gubernatione." Jacobus Altingius, *Methodus Theologiae didacticae* (Amsterdam, 1687), 36.

²⁴ Maresius, *Collegium Theologicum*, 65. See also, Heidanus, *Corpus theologiae christianae*, 357.

²⁵ This will be substantially dealt with in a later section of this chapter.

²⁶ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 144.

²⁷ He states that "All animate beings share in this providence" and "As inanimate creatures, so those that are endued with life and sense are the charge and care of God's providence." Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 144-45.

²⁸ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 144-48.

²⁹ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 149.

care extends itself to the least portions of time, not only months and years, and the long durations of ages, but weeks and days and hours and lesser parcels of time are under the divine disposal and government...”³⁰ Consequently, he states that the least and lowest matters are not hidden from divine inspection or exempted from the government of divine providence.³¹

In particular, Edwards insists upon God’s providence over things seemingly accidental or contingent. Citing Proverbs 16:33, Edwards asserts that “this particular lot is drawn rather than another, is not by chance, but from the divine providence.” He also presents several biblical verses and real historical cases of the world in order to prove that providence is extended to the most contingent and accidental things. On the basis of Scriptural proofs and the real incidents in human history, Edwards argues that even though they look as if they are merely accidental and casual, one should ascribe these events to “the divine disposal and will.” Thus, he claims that “In respect of second causes they are so [contingent], but not in respect to the first, or divine providence.”³² This statement is significant because it does not imply that Reformed doctrine of providence leads to metaphysical determinism. That is, it is important to see here that in attributing providence to God’s will, Edwards is not denying the place of inferior causes but is making it clear that he carefully keeps a distinction between primary and secondary cause. In speaking of Edwards’ relation of providence and secondary cause, the point he is making here is twofold. First, Edwards believes in divine transcendence over creatures in the way that providence is lodged in God’s counsel and His free will. Second, in spite of the sovereign will of God, Edwards believes in contingency of the second causes. Consequently, in Edwards’ view, the distinction between primary and secondary causes

³⁰ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 144.

³¹ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 143. Interestingly, Edwards addresses a detailed explanation of the extent and scope of providence through the natural science. *Ibid.*, 144-47.

³² Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 144. Cf. Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.III.VIII-IX (448).

leads him not only to attribute nothing to mere chance but also to distinguish his position from determinism.

Other Reformed writers commonly take the same position with Edwards concerning the distinction between the primary and the secondary cause in divine providence. For example, in order to show that divine providence does not destroy any possibility of contingencies, Vermigli distinguishes different kinds of causes for a metaphysical solution: the first cause (*causa prima*) and the secondary one (*causa secunda*). According to him, the first cause (God's providence) does not exclude secondary causes (human free choice).³³ Instead, Vermigli teaches that God uses secondary causes as instruments of His providence.³⁴ In his governing all things, therefore, God preserves the nature of his creatures and leads them accordingly. In other words, necessity applies only to the ultimate and first cause, not the proximate or secondary cause.³⁵

Braunius asserts that all things or events are under God's providential control.³⁶ However, as with Edwards, he argues that God's sovereign governance does not deny the contingency:

Hence it is clear that contingent things themselves are under the providence of God. For it must be indeed noted that with respect to God, nothing is contingent, whatever is, that is necessary: because in this way it has been decreed by God from eternity. Therefore, contingencies are spoken of only with respect to things, because they do not have any natural connection (*nexum*). For example, if a roof-tile falls from the

³³ Peter Martyr Vermigli, "Providence," in *Philosophical Works: On Relation of Philosophy to Theology*, edited and translated by Joseph C. McLelland, *The Peter Martyr Library*, vol. 4. (Kirkville: Truman State University Press, 1996), 191. Vermigli also uses the distinction between inward and outward causes. *Ibid.*, 194.

³⁴ Vermigli, "Providence," 191.

³⁵ Vermigli, "Providence," 194.

³⁶ "Ex iis quae dicta sunt satis clarum est, res omnes, quaecunque creatae sunt, subesse providentiae Dei, minimas, maximas, necessarias, contingentes, bonas & malas." Braunius, *Doctrina Foederum sive Systema Theologiae*, 199. Cf. Heidegger writes that "Sic providentiae Dei res, eventus & necessarii, ex hypothesi naturae ad unum a Deo determinati, & contingentes fortuiti atque casuales, & voluntarii, seu liberi, subjiciuntur." Heidegger, *Medulla Theologiae Christianae*, 160.

roof and kills a passerby, the roof- tile indeed has no natural connection with the passerby. However, the connection (nexum) is necessary because it was decreed from eternity in this way. It is also called contingent because it occurs outside of human intention just as if a falling tree kills a man without any hatred or without any intention. So also, chance, fortune and fate are customarily referred to as contingent because they are not in our power/authority for whose occurrence we cannot assign any natural cause.³⁷

Wollebius similarly argues that God's providence does not eliminate the second cause. Rather he maintains that the divine providence establishes it.³⁸ Wollebius also asserts that "What things are contingent in respect of the second causes, are necessary in respect of God's providence; but this necessity is of immutability, not of coaction."³⁹ On the basis of this distinction, he therefore insists that God's providence should be distinguished from the Stoic fatalism: "For the Stoical fate ties God to the connexion of secondary causes; but the Christian fate makes a subordination of the second causes to God's most free will, of which he makes use voluntarily, not of necessity, out of indulgence, rather than indigence."⁴⁰

In short, according to the Reformed thinkers, divine providence does not destroy any possibility of freedom and contingency. Through the distinction between the first and the secondary causes, they all acknowledge the existence of free choice and contingent

³⁷ "Hinc quoque patet ipsas etiam res contingentes providentiae Dei subesse. Notandum enim est, respectu Dei nihil esse contingens, sed quicquid est, illud esse necessarium: cum ita ab aeterno a Deo sit decretum. Contingentia igitur dicuntur tantum respectu rerum, cum quibus nullum habent nexum naturalem. Ex. Gr. Si tegula cadat de tecto & occidat hominem praetereuntem. Nullam enim naturaleeem nexum habet tegula cum homine praetereunte. Nexus tamen iste necessarius est, quia ita ab aeterno fuit decretum. Contingens quoque dicitur, quod fit praeter intentionem hominis. Ut si quis lignum findens hominem occidat, sine odio, sine intentione. Ad contingentia etiam referri solent casus, fortuna & Sors, quia in nostra potestate non sunt, quorum eventibus nullam naturalem causam assignare possumus." Braunius, *Doctrina Foederum sive Systema Theologiae*, 199-200.

³⁸ "Providentia Dei, causas secundas non tollit, sed point." Wollebius, *Compendium theologiae*, 40.

³⁹ "Providentiae Dei respectu, quae causarum secundarum ratione contingentia sunt, necessaria sunt. Necessitate tamen immutabilitatis; non coactionis." Wollebius, *Compendium theologiae*, 40. cf. Marcus Friedrich Wendelin, *Christianae theologiae libri duo* (Hanoviae, 1734), 170.

⁴⁰ "Stoicum enim fatum, caussarium secundarum connexioni Deum alligat: Christianum vero fatum caussas secundas Dei liberrimae voluntati subordinate; quippe quibus non necessario, sed liberrime non ex indigentia sed ex indulgentia, utitur." Wollebius, *Compendium theologiae*, 40. cf. Heidegger, *Medulla Theologiae Christianae*, 153.

event with respect to the secondary or proximate causes. Hence, for Edwards and his Reformed brethren, one has to view a thing or event on two different levels to understand the relation between divine providence and human freedom.⁴¹

II. Divine Providence, the Cause of Sin, and Human Freedom

As has been discussed above, Edwards teaches in his doctrine of providence that God preserves and governs all things that He created. This emphasis on the close relationship between the sovereign will of God, and His creation caused a strong opposition from his adversaries such as Whitby because it appears to imply that God's sovereign providence impinges on man's freedom or right to do his duty or sin.

Hence, in Edwards' debate with Whitby, God's relationship to secondary causes in His providence becomes a significant issue. Whitby and his associates challenge Edwards by stating that if God controls all things, it destroys human rights and freedom, or, if God causes everything, no room is left for the secondary causality. More specifically, Whitby and other Arminians charge Edwards' doctrine of providence of making God guilty of human sin because if God causes all events including sin, it implicates God as the author of human sin.⁴²

The issue of providence and evil particularly becomes a central question to the debate between Edwards and Whitby regarding the relation between God's providence and the secondary causes. In his treatment of the issue of how the human will relates to the all-guiding providence of God, therefore, Edwards focuses on discussing how the providence of God relates to the sinful acts of human persons.⁴³

⁴¹ Cf. Mastricht states that "In praedictis omnibus divina providentia occupatur, non tantum quoad necessaria, quae naturalem habent cum suis causis connexionem Jer. XXXIII. 20.25. sed etiam primo, quoad contingentia, quae incertum, fortuitum & casualem habent nexum: vel cum existentia & natura Dei, quo modo omnia praeter Deum existunt contingenter, utpote quae per se possunt non esse; vel cum causis suis proximis, accidentaliter & contingenter operantibus; vel cum libero hominis arbitrio." Mastricht, *Theoretico practica theologia*, II. 10. XVI.

⁴² This is one of the two main criticisms of Edwards in Whitby's *Four Discourse*.

In fact, the cause of sin was a critical issue in many debates during the sixteenth and seventeenth century. In the broader context of the relation between first cause and secondary cause, Reformed adversaries such as the Arminians charge that Reformed doctrine of providence makes God responsible for the problem of evil.⁴⁴ Many Reformed scholastics have tried to provide an explanation of how these two Christian professions are consistently related: nothing in the world occurs without God's will, but God is not the author of sin.⁴⁵ As with other Reformed theologians, Edwards also firmly rejects the accusation that God is the author of sin.⁴⁶

1. Edwards' Debate with Whitby on the Cause of Sin

Concerning the issue of the cause of sin, Edwards' main opponent was Daniel Whitby. In the debate between Edwards and Whitby, the comprehensive scope of God's providence makes the question hard to avoid as to how providence is related to evil and sin. Specifically, the core of the debate between them lies in two issues: (1) whether God has willed human sin or not, and (2) if God has decreed it, how God's purity and holiness can be maintained.

⁴³ Actually, since the question of the relation between God's providence and the second causes, and between God's providence and the cause of sin is the two sides of the same issue, the answer to the question of the latter also gives the significant clue to the former. In this sense, the issue of God and evil becomes a central question to the issue of whether God's providence destroys human freedom or not.

⁴⁴ For instance, Simon Episcopus, "Nihil enim tam inimicum Religioni, quam fictum illud praedestinationis fatum et inevitabilis parendi ac peccandi necessitas." in: *Opera theologica* II (Amsterdam: J. Blaeu, 1665): *Praefatio ad lectorem christianum*, 74.

⁴⁵ The examination of modern discussion of the problem of evil goes beyond the scope of this study. Yet, it is worth noting that the issue of the cause of sin is still discussed by the scholars in our time. The current discussion is, nevertheless, founded upon the different motive and context from the Reformed debate in Edwards' era. That is, while the previous debate was a debate on the nature of divine agency, current controversies tend to focus on the issue of the existence of God on the basis of the existence of evil. For example, atheist philosophers argue that the existence of God and evil are contradictory, and thus, existence of evil in the world make God's existence improbable. Cf. Nelson Pike, "Hume on Evil," *The Philosophical Review* 72, no. 2 (1963), 180-97; John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love* (London: Macmillan, 1966), Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom and Evil* (London: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 7-64; Richard Swinburne, *Providence and the Problem of Evil* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

⁴⁶ Edwards' discussion focuses on the cause of moral evil or the wrong willing of human beings. Thus, his main interest is moral evil. It does not directly concern natural evil or suffering.

(1) The First Issue: Has God Willed Sin of Mankind?

Has God willed or decreed human sin? Regarding this question, Whitby strongly argues that it is impossible for God to decree sin because it makes God the author of sin.⁴⁷ Thus, Whitby condemns Edwards as “a blasphemer.”⁴⁸ However Edwards replies to Whitby as follows:

But these men wretchedly deceive others and themselves, by these mistaken ideas which they frame: for the innocency and truth of this assertion, that God from eternity did will or decree the commission of sin, will plainly appear to any unprejudiced person, if, 1. he considers the nature of that divine will and decree which we speak of. 2. If he takes notice that the divine permission (which is granted by all Arminians) is the same with God’s will or decree. 3. If he acknowledges the eternal reasons of good and evil. 4. If he considers the nature of divine providence.⁴⁹

Indeed, Edwards maintains that human sin was decreed by God from eternity.

Nevertheless, he here argues that in order to avoid misunderstanding or prejudice of the assertion, one needs to understand carefully the following four points: the nature of divine will, the nature of divine permission, the reason of good and evil, and the nature of divine providence in general. Edwards then elaborates on each point in sequence.

First, Edwards claims that the nature of the divine will or decree of human sin should be rightly understood. He criticizes Whitby’s claim that God antecedently wills the salvation of all people but consequently wills not the salvation of all, but only of some, on the grounds of certain conditions.⁵⁰ For him, this is the untenable hypothesis of contradictory wills in God.⁵¹

⁴⁷ For example, see Whitby, *Four Discourse*, 48-54.

⁴⁸ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 151.

⁴⁹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 152.

⁵⁰ According to Arminians, even though the antecedent will of God exists prior to the acts of the creature, the consequent will rests on the will of the creature that precedes it in time. God, thus, antecedently wills salvation of all people and consequently wills salvation only for those who have chosen to believe in Christ. Cf. Jacobus Arminius, *Analysis cap. IX ad Romanos, cum Aphorismis*, in *Opera theologica* (Leiden, 1629), 790-92; Turretin, *Institutio* I, III.XV.VIII; Leigh, *Body of Divinity*, II.vi, (199).

⁵¹ Reformed theologians teach the distinctions in the divine will, such as the distinction between the ultimate divine good pleasure (*voluntas beneplaciti*) and the outwardly designated divine will (*voluntas*

Criticizing the Arminian understanding of two contradictory wills in God, Edwards claims that “We do not ascribe to God two contrary wills, nay, not two wills, but one and the same will differently consider’d. He wills, and not wills the same thing in a different respect.”⁵² He insists that, for example, according to Ezekiel 18:23 and 33, God does not take pleasure and delight in the death and destruction of the wicked.⁵³ However, Proverbs 1:26 and Jeremiah 9:24 show that God takes pleasure in judgment and righteousness. Edwards resolves the tension between them by stating that God does not delight in the death of sinners, “as they are abstractedly and barely consider’d; that is, as they are merely afflictive, and destructive to his creatures;” but God takes pleasure in them, “as they are a punishment for disobeying the divine law, as they are the execution of justice.”⁵⁴ Here, Edwards distinguishes between decretal or decretive will and approbatory or preceptive will of God.⁵⁵ He spells out this distinction as follows:

So in the present case, God wills sin, and he doth not will sin. Both these propositions are true in a different sense: He will sin; that is, it was his will and pleasure from eternity, that men in the world should not be sinless, but that there should be sin in the world. He wills not sin; that is, when men by their own depraved wills commit it, he approves not of it; he hates and abhors it. We may then, nay, we must distinguish between the decretal and the approbatory or preceptive will of God: and accordingly, every man, when he sins, sins against the latter will of God; but he sins with the former will; that is, as it barely predetermines the futurity of the sinful

signi) or the similar distinction between, hidden will (*voluntas arcanum*) and a revealed will (*voluntas revelatum*). Nevertheless, these distinctions do not indicate contrary wills in God. Thus, unlike the Arminians, Reformed orthodox maintains “the soteriological consistency of the original divine intention with the result of God’s willing.” Muller, “Grace, Election, and Contingent Choice,” 273.

⁵² Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 152. Turretin similarly states that “Quamvis unica sit et simplicissima voluntas in Deo, per quam omnia unico et simplicissimo actu comprehendit, ut unico intuitu omnia videt et intelligit: quia tamen circa varia objecta diversimode versatur; hinc fit ut modo nostro concipiendi, ut multiplex apprehendatur, non in se et intrinsece a parte actus volendi, sed extrinsece et objective a parte volitorum.” Turretin, *Institutes* I, III.XV.I (199).

⁵³ The standard Reformed reading of these texts, apart from the hypothetical universalists, indicated a single divine will understood in a two-fold way. Cf. Richard A. Muller, “A Tale of Two Wills? Calvin and Amyraut on Exekiel 18:23,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 44 (2009): 211-25.

⁵⁴ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 153.

⁵⁵ Concerning the series of distinctions in the divine willing by the Reformed orthodox, see Muller, *PRRD* III, 456- 475.

action. Thus we are told that Christ was deliver'd, that is, betray'd, by the determinate counsel, that is, the determinate will, of God, 2 acts 23. and so as to all the other evil actions of the sons of men, they were the object of the eternal counsel and will of God.⁵⁶

Accordingly, Edwards defines God's dispositive will as His will "whereby he purposeth and determineth all things; that are to be done." More specifically, he teaches that this will indicates the decree and providence of God "whereby he appoints and determines the particular condition of all persons, with all its circumstances, and actually executes whatever was appointed." Edwards examines Ephesians 1:5; 11 and Isaiah 14:24 to support his argument.⁵⁷

On the other hand, Edwards claims that the declarative or preceptive will of God involves our duty to God and thus reveals what God requires of us in our lives and actions. He mentions Psalm 40:8 and John 7:17 as such cases.⁵⁸ Thus, Edwards writes that "God's preceptive will is that which is most properly to be done by us. Whatever it is that he hath declared to be not only his pleasure, but our duty, we must think ourselves obliged to perform."⁵⁹

This distinction between the decretive will and the preceptive will of God is generally attested and rightly used by the Reformed scholastics. For example, Benedict Pictet states as follows:

This decretive will has not only determined what shall be done by men, but has also determined what things shall be enjoined upon them, or revealed to them. [Furthermore] the preceptive will (*voluntas praecepti*) is, properly speaking, the execution of a part of the decretive will, namely, that part which has determined what shall be revealed to, or enjoined upon, men in due time.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 153. Cf. the analogy of two sons' wishes in Augustine's *Enchiridion* 26, 101.

⁵⁷ John Edwards, *Theologia Reformata: or the Body and Substance of the Christian Religion, comprised in distinct Discourses or Treatises upon The Apostles Creed, The Lord's Prayer, and The Ten Commandments*. Vol II (London: 1713), 166.

⁵⁸ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* III, 166.

⁵⁹ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* III, 169.

As with Edwards and Pictet, Turretin distinguishes the difference between the decretive and preceptive will of God:

Hence have arisen various distinctions of the will of God. The first and principal distinction is that of the decretive and preceptive will. The former means that which God wills to do or permits himself; the latter what he wills that we should do. The former relates to the futurity and the event of things and is the rule of God's external acts; the latter is concerned with precepts and promises and is the rule of our action. The former cannot be resisted and is always fulfilled: "Who hath resisted his will?" (Rom. 9:19). The latter is often violated by men: "How often would I have gathered you together, and ye would not" (Mt. 23:37).⁶¹

Turretin claims that since the precept falls also under the decree as to proposition, but yet not as to execution, God can without contradiction will "as to precept what he does not will as to decree inasmuch as he wills to prescribe something to man, but does not will to effect it."⁶² That is, God's decree does not contradict His command when God orders to man his duty because God wills indeed the thing not as to the execution of the event but

⁶⁰ Pictet, *Theologia christiana*. II.vi.6.

⁶¹ "Hinc ortae sunt variae voluntatis Dei distinctiones. Prima et praecipua illa est, qua tribuitur in voluntatem decreti et praecepti. illa statuit Deus quid velit ipse facere vel permittere: ista quid velit a nobis fieri. illa respicit rerum futuritionem et eventum, et est norma actionum Dei ad extra: Ista versatur circa praecepta et promissiones, et est norma actionum nostrarum. illi resisti nequit, et semper impletur, Rom. ix. 19. voluntati ejus quis restiti? ista saepe violatur ab hominibus, Mat. xxiii, 37. Quoties volui vos congregare, et noluistis?" Turretino, *Institutio I*, 199. In addition to Edwards, Pictet, and Turretin, other Reformed scholastics commonly follow the distinction between the decretive and the preceptive will of God. Cf. Maresius, *Collegium theologicum*, 32-33; Heidegger, *Corpus theologiae*, 89-90; Van Mastricht, *Theoretico practica theologia*, II, 10, XXIII-XXV, 162-163. In particular, Mastricht gives a more detailed explanation of the scope of the distinction: "Voluntati decernenti subsunt 1. praedestination, electio, reprobatio, praeteritio. 2. foedus gratiae, de electorum salute, inter Patrem & Filium. 3. promissiones absoluta, regenerationis, sanctificationis, fidei, perseverantiae. 4. complementa harum promissionum, per gratiam discriminantem &c. Ad voluntatem legislativam seu praecepti, spectant, praeceptiones & prohibitions, promissiones & comminationes. Circa istam distributionem, hoc sollicite notandum, quod, sicut decernens tantum determinat eventum, seu futuritionem rei, non autem ejus bonitatem & malitiam voliti, dum interim nihil statuit de ejusdem futuritione aut non-futuritione." Ibid., II, 10, XXV, 162-63.

⁶² "Licet praeceptum cadat etiam sub decretum quoad propositionem; non tamen cadit quoad executionem... Sic Deus potest sine contradictione velle quoad praeceptum, quod non vult quoad decretum; quatenus vult quidem aliquid homini praescribere, sed non vult id ipsum efficere..." Turretino, *Institutio I*, 199.

as to the proposition of duty.⁶³ Turretin thus insists that even though we conceive diverse wills in God, they are not actually contrary to each other.⁶⁴

Braunius deals with the sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22:1-18 to elaborate this distinction. He asserts that whereas God willed Abraham to prepare himself to sacrifice Isaac by the will of the sign or precept, God willed to conserve Isaac's life by the will of the decree or divine good pleasure.⁶⁵ Braunius maintains as follows:

In the first act of the will toward Abraham, God declared his own lordship in human life and at the same time examined Abraham's obedience. Concerning that act, the will of God is conceived by us as the will of sign or precept. In the second act, however, God revealed his own decree. And we call this act as the will of decree or good will. Therefore, the commands of God are not absolute but comparative because they should be observed by its own ends. And they always should be applied to us concerning the revealed will of God, as long as God manifested his own hidden will.⁶⁶

Thus, according to Braunius, this text does not show that God first willed the death of Isaac and then afterwards willed his life. Rather, he asserts that God manifested the single

⁶³ "...sed non pugnat decretum Dei cum ejus mandato, quando praecipit homini officium quod ab ipso debetur, ad quod tamen praestandum vires homini dare non vult, quia vult quidem rem quoad propositionem officii, sed non vult tamen quoad executionem eventus." Turretino, *Institutio I*, 200.

⁶⁴ "Hinc sit, ut licet istae voluntates ut diversae a nobis concipiantur pro diversitate objectorum, non sint tamen contrariae; quia ut jam dictum, non versantur circ idem." Turretino, *Institutio I*, 200. Nevertheless, Turretin distinguishes preceptive will of God into affirmative and negative and gives a more detailed qualification as follows "Voluntas praecipiens duplicia objecta habet; alia affirmativa; quorum respectu et ipsa affirmative dici potest, dici potest, quando rei effectio praecipitur; alia negative; quorum respectu et ipsa negative potest appellari, quae consistit in rei prohibitione. Ita voluntas decernens habet objecta affirmativa, quorum respectu dicitur effectrix et affirmativa, tam respectu termini quam principii; alia vero negativa, quorum respectu voluntas cessans dici potest et negativa, si non quoad principium saltem quoad terminum, et tunc vocatur permissiva, per quam statuit non impedire creaturam peccantem. Licet enim volitio ista sit positiva quoad principium, quantenus vult non impedire, bene tamen negativa dicitur quoad terminum qui est non-impeditio." Turretino, *Institutio I*, III.XV.VI (200).

⁶⁵ "Ita Deus voluit voluntate signi & praecepti, ut Abrahamus se accingeret, ad immolandum filium suum Isaacum: quamvis voluntate decreti & beneplaciti eum in vita conservare voluerit." Braunius, *Doctrina Foederum*, 80.

⁶⁶ "Primo actu istius voluntatis erga Abrahamum declarat dominium suum in hominum vitam, & simul exigit obedientiam ab Abrahamo. Ad hunc actum voluntas Dei a nobis concipitur tanquam voluntas signi sive praecepti. Secundo autem actu patefecit decretum suum. Et hunc actum dicimus voluntatem decreti, vel beneplaciti. Ergo mandata Dei non absolute, sed comparate cum finibus suis spectanda sunt. Et semper nobis attendendum est ad voluntatem Dei revelatam, donec, Deus occultam suam voluntatem quoque manifestaverit." Braunius, *Doctrina Foederum*, 80-81.

and inalterable will of God to Abraham in various ways.⁶⁷ Accordingly, in opposition to the adversaries of the Reformed, Braunius insists that the Reformed do not attribute two contrary wills to God.⁶⁸

In short, when Edwards approached the concept of an antecedent and a consequent divine will, he understood like other Reformed thinkers that the former referred to the absolute or decretive will and the latter to the preceptive will of God. According to them, although it may be ignored and disobeyed by sinful human beings, the latter rests on the eternal decree without any contradiction with the former and fully concurs with the righteousness of the eternal decree. Consequently, this distinction serves to clarify the distinction between God's hidden will and his revealed will against the alternative reading proposed by Whitby and other Arminians.

On the basis of the distinction between the decretive and preceptive will of God, Edwards particularly responds to Whitby's two specific criticisms against him. The first one is that if God has willed human sin, we should pray that we may sin; since Christ taught us to pray that his Father's will be done by us. Edwards, however, replies that "neither God's purposing nor preceptive will approve of the commission of sin."⁶⁹ He notes as follows:

... not the first, for it only predetermines the future being of sin in the world; not the second, for it commands us to avoid sin; and therefore it is as ignorantly as

⁶⁷ "Si tamen accurate loqui velimus, voluntas beneplaciti & signi duae diversae voluntates non sunt, (in Deo enim unicam tantum esse voluntatem, jam demonstratum est) sed unica tantum, quae vario modo se habet circa hominem, homini sese varie manifestat. Una enim eademque voluntate Deus varie se manifestat Abrahamo." Braunius, *Doctrina Foederum*, 80.

⁶⁸ Braunius, *Doctrina Foederum*, 81. Cf. Van Mastricht states that these two wills are not repugnant to each other: "Unde evidentem perspicimus (1) qua ratione voluntas Dei semper & universaliter sit efficax: illa, scilicet. Decernens circa eventum; haec legislativa circa nostrum officium: dum interim, multa serio vult, voluntate legislativa, quae numquam fiunt; prout multa quoque fiunt, voluntate decernente quae non vult. Atque etiam, hinc perspicimus (2) ut nulla, in his voluntatibus, a parte Dei sit repugnantia; quatenus non idem, aut eodem modo volunt." Van Mastricht, *Theoretico practica theologia*, II, 10, XXV, 163.

⁶⁹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 173.

ridiculously said, that Christ hath taught us to pray that we may sin, upon the supposal of the decree.⁷⁰

In this way, Edwards argues that both declarative and preceptive wills are included in the petition of the Lord's Prayer.⁷¹ He, therefore, insists that Whitby's assertion is utterly groundless.⁷² Edwards also reveals that this argument is wholly and entirely borrowed from John Stearn's (1624-1669) *Medela Animi*. Edwards brings in Stearn's passage and compares it with that of Whitby,⁷³ and he charges Whitby with plagiarism because it is evident from this comparison that Whitby took out the whole sentences and periods out of Stearn's work.⁷⁴

Whitby's other argument is that according to Edwards' teaching, man must both obey and transgress the will of God by the same sinful action. Namely, on the one hand, one transgresses God's law because sin is a transgression of God's holy will. On the other hand, however, one obeys the will of God because sinning is the doing of God's will. Thus, Whitby argues that Edwards' argument is absurd. However, Edwards answers that Whitby once again fails to distinguish the difference between the purposing and the preceptive will of God:

The former respects only the being of sin, that as to the event there shall be such a thing; the latter necessarily implies approbation. When a man sins, he transgresses this latter will of God; but 'tis most irrationably said that he obeys it at the same time. It is true, the purposing, or decretal will is fulfill'd; which is as much as to say, the sinful event happens; there is such a thing as the commission of such or such a moral evil; but this doth no way imply obedience to the will of God as it disapproves of sin, yea, 'tis a perfect disobedience.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 174.

⁷¹ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* III, 166. Cf. Turretin insists that in some passages such as John 6:38 and the Lords' Prayer, both decretive and preceptive wills of God are indicated at the same time. Turretin, *Institutio* I, III.XV.III (199).

⁷² Edwards reveals that it is from *Medela Animi*, l. 2.c.21. p. 306.

⁷³ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 174-75.

⁷⁴ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 176.

⁷⁵ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 177.

For Edwards, the problem indeed arises only when the preceptive will is incorrectly paired with the ultimate will of God. To support his argument, Edwards quotes Augustine's *Enchiridion* which also implies the distinction between the decretive and preceptive will of God.⁷⁶

In addition to the distinction between the decretive will and the preceptive will of God, to clarify the nature of divine permission of sin, Edwards also distinguishes the difference between the permissive and effective will of God:

The decree reaches not good and evil actions after the same manner; for as to the first it is effective, containing in it that divine grace which enables men to be good, and to do good actions: as to the latter, it is permissive, that is, it determines to suffer or not to suffer them to be done. And God decrees this sufferance, by determining to withhold his grace and good spirit from some persons, and not to hinder their sinning.⁷⁷

Therefore, since divine decree does not extend to good and evil by the same manner, Edwards prefers using the terms such as “permission and suffering, or decreeing to permit or suffer” rather than “willing and decreeing.” Nevertheless, he notes that “it is not to be deny'd, that whilst he permits sin, he hinders it: for what he is pleas'd to suffer, is little, in respect of what he suffers not.”⁷⁸

Second, Edwards discusses the nature of the divine permission of sin to prove God's willing of humanity's sin. The main issue in this matter is whether the divine permission of sin involves the will of God or not. Whitby insists, the permission which

⁷⁶ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 178. Edwards quotes: “Quantum ad ipsos malos attinet, quod Deus noluit, fecerunt: Quantum vero ad omnipotentiam Dei, nullo modo id efficere valuerunt. Hoc quipped ipso, quod contra voluntatem Dei fecerunt, de ipsis facta est voluntas ejus. Ut miro & ineffabili modo non fiat praeter ejus voluntatem, quod etiam sit contra ejus voluntatem, quia non fieret, si non sineret; nec utiq; nolens sinit, sed volens. Nec sineret bonus fieri male, nisi omnipotens etiam de malo facere posset bene.” *Augustine, Enchiridion*, 26, 100.

⁷⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 129. Edwards also writes that “It is God's will, either effective or permissive; the first in good, the latter in evil actions, that is the ground of foresight.” Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 83. cf. Turretin also similarly states that “Qui vult finem, vult etiam media, sed non semper eadem volitione; si media sunt diversae naturae, potest velle finem volitione effectiva, quia finis per se bonus est; sed medium volitione tantum permissiva, si sit malum, non tam volendo medium ipsum, quam usus medii, nimir. peccati ipsius permissionem, et ordinationem.” Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VII.VIII (464).

⁷⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 129.

terminated on sin is not an act of God's will.⁷⁹ Edwards however strongly argues that divine willing extends to the permission of sin because permission contains the divine will and decree in it. He insists that permission without divine willing is "a bare negative thing, it is idle, drowsy, and careless, and represents God either an ignorant or an idle spectator."⁸⁰ Edwards also states that a bare non-hindrance of sinning is impossible since man "depends every moment on God as to his being, and as to the exerting of his faculties."⁸¹ On the basis of these understandings, he gives a definition of the term "permission" as follows:

Permission is not a bare not hindring men from sinning, but it is a positive thing, because it is God's determining to withhold his actual assistance and grace from some persons, whereby they fall into sin. This voluntary suspension of grace was exerted towards Adam; otherwise he could not have transgressed: and the case is the same with all his posterity who transgress the divine laws.⁸²

Thus, Edwards maintains that permission of sin is an act of God's will; "that is, his will not to hinder the being of sin, though he could hinder it if he please'd."⁸³ On this consideration, he further states as follows:

Yea ... the act of God's will is terminated upon sin, for it is his positive will that his power shall not be exerted in restraining persons from sinning. It is his will that the

⁷⁹ Whitby, *Four Discourses*, 59.

⁸⁰ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 154.

⁸¹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 166.

⁸² Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 155.

⁸³ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 155. The similar argument is found in Turretin. Emphasizing divine permission is not ethical or moral but physical, he states: "Permissio ista non est concipienda negative, quasi esset mera ἀνεργία seu cessatio voluntatis... Sed concipienda est positive et affirmativa, non simpliciter, ut Deus non velit impedire peccatum, quae est otiosa negatio, sed ut velit non impedire, quae efficax est affirmatio, ut permissio actum positivum voluntatis arcanæ importet, qua Deus statuit consulto et volens non impedire peccatum, licet nolle dicatur quoad voluntatem revelatam approbationis." Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VII.VII (463). Thus, he argues that Reformed use of permission should be distinguished from Arminian use of permission. However, Turretin more specifically qualifies the meaning of permission by noting that "hoc ita intelligimus, non quasi voluntas divina habeat praecise et perse pro objecto peccatum: jnam cum voluntas pro objecto nihil nisi bonum habere possit, malum qua malum non potest velle: sed ut voluntas terminetur ad permissionem ejus, quae bona est." Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VII.VIII (463).

commission of sin in the world shall not be hindered, but that some men shall be left to their own disorder'd wills and lusts.⁸⁴

In order to defend this argument, Edwards first points out the inconsistency in Whitby's argument against him. Whitby firmly argues that God does not will sin because permission is no act of the will. However, in *Four Discourses*, Whitby also clearly states that the permission is an act of God's will "terminated upon himself or his power, or a will not to exert his power to restrain the doing it by others."⁸⁵ Thus, for Edwards, Whitby is inconsistent in this matter because he affirms two contrary facts at the same time.⁸⁶

Second, Edwards relies on the testimonies of Scripture to refute Whitby and to support his argument on the nature of permission. Edwards meticulously examines the very words and passages by which permission is expressed in the Bible, whether with relation to God or human beings. Edwards starts to analyze the nature of divine permission from the Old Testament. He maintains that the Hebrew word which refers to "to permit or suffer" is "*janach*, or rather *hinniach*, (for 'tis not found in Kal but in Hiphil)." They mean "something positive and willfully done by the person or persons to whom 'tis applied, as in 1 Chronicles 16:21." Edwards explains that in 1 Chronicles 16:21, God did not "barely hinder" the people of other nations from doing wrong to the Israelites. Instead, God protected the Israelites and provided special care for them.⁸⁷

Edwards also claims that the Hebrew words which denote permission in several passages such as Exodus 32:10 and Jeremiah 43:6 imply "the assent or consent of the mind." Moreover, he asserts that *Nathan* which means "to give or grant" is also translated into "suffer or permit" as in Psalm 16:10. Edwards argues that this suffering or giving

⁸⁴ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 155.

⁸⁵ Whitby, *Four Discourses*, 59.

⁸⁶ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 155.

⁸⁷ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 156. Edwards uses Psalm 119:121 as another example.

clearly means more than a bare indifference. That is, the meaning of words contains in it “the express will and pleasure of God;” Christ’s body should not stay in the grave, but be raised up the third day.⁸⁸

Next, Edwards teaches that three words in the New Testament signify permission or suffering. The first one is “ἀφίειν,” or “ἀφίησιν” as in Matthew 3:15. He maintains that the verse does not mean that John the Baptist should be merely passive and not hinder Christ from being baptized by him. Rather, this permitting here means that John the Baptist should comply with Christ’s command and fulfill all righteousness. Edwards also mentions Matthew 19:14 as the same case. He insists that the word “ἀφετε” here signifies some act of the will or “even real performance.” Edwards adds that the usage of the Vulgar Latin also proves this.⁸⁹

The second Greek word which Edwards deals with is “ἔαν.” For example, in Luke 22:51, “ἔατε” which indicates a suffering or permitting refers to “something positive.” More specifically, like Matthew 26:52 as a parallel verse, it denotes that “this suffering was a willingness to submit to the present dispensation, and a shewing it by real action, sheathing the bloody sword.” Edwards also claims other passages such as Acts 5:38; 14:16 and 1 Corinthians 10:13 imply a positive act for the verb “suffer.”⁹⁰

The third Greek word is “ὅπιτρέπειν” as in Matthew 8:22. Edwards states that the suffering in the verse evidently means “a positive grant for Christ.” That is, this suffering or permitting indicates “Christ’s assent or leave.” To support his interpretation, Edwards particularly quotes Hammond’s paraphrase on the text, “I beseech they leave that I may, &c.” In addition to Matthew 8:22, he presents several other verses such as Deuteronomy

⁸⁸ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 157.

⁸⁹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 157.

⁹⁰ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 158.

24:1, John 19:38, and Hebrews 6:3. Edwards asserts that in these passages, suffering or permission means not a negative thing, but a voluntary act.⁹¹

Edwards also disputes Whitby's reliance on Scripture. Whitby particularly mentions two texts from the Bible in favor of his objections against Edwards' proposition. First, Whitby argues that the sinful actions in Jeremiah 32:35 were not decreed because the passage states that they did not come into God's heart. He claims that if they had been willed by God, they would have come into His heart. Edwards, however, replies that the original words, "דלא עלה אעלבי," are not correctly translated into English. He maintains that the verb sometimes signifies "to remember, or call to mind" in the passage like Jeremiah 44:21.⁹² Nevertheless, Edwards teaches that such a case is very rare. Instead, in many places such as Isaiah 65:17 and Jeremiah 3:16, it means "calling things to mind with desire and affection." In other places such as 2 Kings 12:4 and Isaiah 65:17, it similarly indicates "there shall be no love or affection towards it" or "the affection and good will of the speaker." Edwards thus concludes that "דלא עלה אעלבי" is to be translated as "neither did it ascend upon my heart." and its right and plain meaning is "those practices which the Israelites indulg'd themselves in, were highly displeasing to God."⁹³

Whitby also quotes Psalm 5:4 to back up his claim that God has not willed humanity's sin. He argues that since the text is translated as "Thou art a God not willing iniquity," it implies that God cannot will or decree the sinful deeds of mankind. Edwards, however, insists that Whitby again perverts the plain meaning of the text because the Psalmist does "not speak of the bare willing of sin, but of approving of it, and taking pleasure in it."⁹⁴ As to this argument, Edwards particularly relies on four different

⁹¹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 160.

⁹² Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 170.

⁹³ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 171.

⁹⁴ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 171-72.

resources: (1) He compares several different translations of the Bible like the Latin Bible, the French Bible, the Hebrew Bible, and the LXX,⁹⁵ (2) Edwards quotes Cocceius' commentary on this passage, (3) He uses Marinus' *Thesaurus Linguae Sanctae* (1593) and Conrad Kircher of Augsburg's *A Concordance to the Septuagint* (1602) to approve his interpretation of the text, and (4) Edwards insists that the verb of the text, *Chaphatz*, is generally interpreted "by our own learned translators as to like, to please, to be pleas'd, to delight in, to have delight in, to desire, to have pleasure."⁹⁶ On these considerations, Edwards strongly argues that Whitby's interpretation of the text is groundless and absurd.

Besides the examination of Hebrew and Greek usage in the Bible and the refutation of Whitby's exegetical arguments, Edwards examines how permission is expressed in Latin to support his claim. He maintains that the Latin words, "permittere" and "permissio" imply a voluntary activity because the root, "mittere" clearly contains the meaning, and it is much more strengthened when combined with the preposition "per."⁹⁷ Thus, according to Edwards, Latin also supports his argument that God's permitting and willing are exchangeable terms.⁹⁸

Meanwhile, many other Reformed writers also clearly argue that divine permission includes divine willing of sin in it. For example, like Edwards, *Synopsis purioris theologiae* clearly states that divine permission of sin is an act of God's will:

We establish in such a way that the permission of God is not idle, or something happen to God unwillingly, because it is conducted either by not caring or negligently; and hence his council should not be opposed to his will. Indeed, God permits willingly and by decision; and effectively directs sin, nor does he rarely use that sin to exercise his own justice....⁹⁹

⁹⁵ However, Edwards does not specifically reveal which versions of the Bible he is mentioning.

⁹⁶ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 172.

⁹⁷ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 162.

⁹⁸ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 162.

In a similar vein to *Synopsis*, Beza states that God permits willingly what He permits. He argues that if God unwillingly permits anything, He is not almighty God.¹⁰⁰ Turretin claims that “the permission involves a positive act of the secret will by which God designedly and willingly determined not to hinder sin, although he may be said to nill it as to the revealed will of approbation.”¹⁰¹ As with Edwards, Gill also holds that even though God permits sin to be done, divine permission is not a bare permission but “a voluntary permission”:

this permission is not a connivance at sin; nor a concession or grant of it; much less does it express any approbation of it; nor is it barely a leaving men to a liberty of their wills, to do as they pleased;...nor is it a mere naked permission, but a voluntary one, yea, an efficacious one; God’s will is in it, and efficacy attends it.¹⁰²

Gill maintains that this is exemplified by the biblical passages such as Psalm 81:12 and Acts 14:16 which express God’s giving up men to the concupiscence of their own hearts and suffering them to follow their own wicked ways, respectively. He nevertheless argues that God has willed sin “not by his effective will, but by his permissive will.”¹⁰³ Thus, God cannot be charged as the author of sin.

⁹⁹ “Sic permissionem illam Dei, non esse otiosam, statuimus, aut Deo invito aliquid accidere, aut non curante, aut quod agitur negligente; ac proinde voluntati ejus et consilio non debet opponi. Permittit enim Deus volens, et consulto; ac potenter dirigit peccata, nec raro eam permissionem ad judicia sua exercenda adhibet ...” *Synopsis purioris theologiae*, 94.

¹⁰⁰ “Flasum esse ex eo constat, quod si Deus quippiam inuitus permittit, Deus certe, id est omnipotes, non est. Sin vero quasi non curans permittere quippiam dicatur, quantum absumus ab Epicureismo? Superest ergo ut volens permittat quod permittit. Voluntas igitur permissioni non opponitur. Absurdum autem illud est sane, si falsum est: sed hanc absurditatem satis attento cuius ex eo patere posse dico, quod hui distinctionis authores qua permissio voluntati opponitur, hac ratione non modo non assequuntur quod volunt (nempe ut Deus author mali non cesseatur, quod nos quidem ultro confitemur) verum etiam contrarium prorsus efficiunt.” Theodoro Beza, *Quaestionum et Responsionum Christianarum Libellus* (London, 1577), 100.

¹⁰¹ Turretin, *Institutio I*, VI. VII. VII.

¹⁰² John Gill, *A Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity: or A System of Evangelical Truths, Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures* (London: Whittingham and Rowland, 1815), 215.

¹⁰³ Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 53. Gill argues that “since there is a wide difference between doing it himself, and doing it by others, or ordering it to be done, which only can make him the author of sin; and voluntarily permitting or suffering it to be done by others.”Ibid.

In comparison to Edwards and his Reformed brethren mentioned above, however, a more careful and subtle application of the term permission concerning the relation between divine permission of sin and divine willing of it is found in Voetius. Voetius distinguishes between an abstract and a concrete aspect of sin: the former refers to “sin as such or the ἀνομία and the viciousness of a human act strictly and precisely spoken,” while the latter indicates sin as “a complex matter (complexum).”¹⁰⁴ He maintains that in the concrete sense, three aspects of the sinful act are further distinguished: “1. the act that is the substratum in which the lawlessness inheres; 2. the lawlessness itself or moral vice that inheres in this act; 3. the possibility to be guided, or the guidance, of this sinful act to some good ...”¹⁰⁵

For Voetius, these three dimensions of evil deeds are related to God’s will or decree in different ways. He argues that God wills and decrees the natural act as such (the substratum), and the direction to a good end in a direct way.¹⁰⁶ However, God decrees to permit sin as lawlessness only as a consequence.¹⁰⁷ Here we see that for Voetius divine

¹⁰⁴ “... ut & tota Dei providential circa totum complexum peccati concrete scil. Cum subjecto substrato & eventu ac omnibus consequentibus sumptum, ab ipso peccato qua tali, seu ipsa ἀνομία in se, per se, & praecise accepta accurate distinguere debet.” Voetius, *Selectatrum Disputationum* I, 1060.

¹⁰⁵ “Sumi ergo potest vel abstracte pro peccato qua tali, seu ἀνομία, et vitio actus humani stricte ac precise sic dicto, ut contra actum substratum seu ipsam actionem et motionem, in genere entis physice seu metaphysice spectatam contradistinguatur. Vel concrete, pro toto complexo, quod constate istis tribus: 1. actu substrato, cui ἀνομία inhaeret; 2. ipsa ἀνομία seu vitio morali, quod actui illi inhaeret. 3. ordinabilitate et ordinatione illius actus peccaminosi in aliquod bonum...” Voetius, *Selectatrum Disputationum* I, 1132. Wendelin similarly states that “Sunt igitur in peccatis hominum, circa quae divina occupatur permission, quatuor in primis observanda & distinguenda. (1) Actio per se, quatenus est action, (2) Vitium actioni inharens, (3) Directio organi mali & actionis vitiosae in obiectum cerum, (4) Finis directionis, e quo accidit peccato iudicii divini ratio: ut per hominum peccata Deus exequatur iusta sua judicia. Primum, tertium, & quartum a Deo est, Deumque autorem habet... secundum, in quo proprie peccati consistit ratio, non a Deo, sed a solo est homine: adeoque solus homo peccati, quatenus est peccatum, author est.” Wendelin, *Christianae theologiae*, 176.

¹⁰⁶ “Actum naturalem qua talem, et ordinabilitatem in bonum Deus directe vult et decernit; Vitium non vult sed permissionem vitij, et quidem consequenter.” Gisbertus Voetius, *Thersites heautontimorumenos* (Utrecht, 1635), 213.

¹⁰⁷ “Permissio efficax nulla est, quia est cessatio ab actu et impedimenti suspensio. ... Res illa, cui peccatum cohaeret proprie et directe habet determinatam veritatem; peccatum non nisi consequenter et quidem per accidens: Deus enim per se illud non intendit, nec aliquem ad illud destinat, sed consequenter

permission is applied only to “sin as lawlessness.” In other words, God does not directly decree lawlessness to effect but only permits it. Thus, he states as follows:

Since simple and bare permission, the will of permitting or permissive decree (because it is called constantly negative) is attributed to God concerning such event, it should be accepted with limitation and distinction, with respect to certainly *ἀνομία* in itself, or sin as sin, as such, or taken precisely, abstractly and formally; not truly with respect to underlying and ordination in good and not with respect to sin taken concretely and as the whole complex.¹⁰⁸

Hence, even though Voetius agrees with Edwards that permission of sin is an act of God’s will,¹⁰⁹ he more sharply restricts the use of the term permission through the tripartition of sin by arguing that understanding of God’s relationship to human sinful acts in terms of permission should be applied only to lawlessness in itself.¹¹⁰

Third, Edwards claims, the “reasons” of good and evil show that God has willed the sin of mankind. His discussion of this argument is relatively brief. Edwards argues that since God is the most perfect being, the ideas of all things are in God’s mind. For example, if God has from eternity determined the nature of truth and goodness, he must likewise determine that of falsehood and evil. Thus, he maintains that both good and evil

intendit permittere.” Voetius, *Thersites heautontimorumenos*, 214. Voetius also comments that “quidquid est privationis et pravitatis decernit permittere ut fiat non vero decernit facere.” Voetius, *Termino vitae*, 119.

¹⁰⁸ “Cum simplex & nuda permissio, voluntas permittendi, seu decretum permissivum (quod negativum subinde vocatur) Deo circa tales eventus tribuitur, id etiam limitate & cum distinctione accipiendum, respectu scilicet *ἀνομία* in se, seu peccati qua peccati, ut sic, seu praecise, abstracte & formaliter sumti, non vero respectu actus substrati & ordinationis in bonum, nec respectu peccati concrete, & pro toto complexo sumti.” Voetius, *Selectatum Disputationum* I, 1134. He also writes that “Quod si in prima significatione accipatur peccatum, jam dicimus nullum positivum decretum seu nullam voluntatem efficiendi, sed tantum permittendi; nullam item positivam realis providentiae executionem, determinationem, et causalitatem, sed tantum puram putam permissionem Deo circa peccatum posse tribui. Sin vero in secunda significatione; jam cum autoribus nostris contendimus, non nudam permissionem Dei solummodo tribuendam, sed insuper realem secundum positivum et efficax voluntatis decretum operationem ejusque adjunctum seu affectionem necessitatem; non siquidem absolute sed limitate, quod ad actum substratum, et ordinabilitatem atque ordinationem in bonum, haec enim a Deo summo bono et prima causa effici nemo, nisi Epicureus, negat.” Ibid., 1332.

¹⁰⁹ “Quicquid boni est sive naturalis sive moralis Deus decernit efficere, quidquid mali decernit permittere. Quidquid est privationis & pravitatis decernit permittere ut fiat non vero decernit facere. Sicut in tempore non facit, sed permittit, sic ab aeterno decernit non facere sed permittere.” Voetius, *Termino vitae*, 119.

¹¹⁰ See also Wendelin, *Christianae theologiae*, 176.

are “seated in the mind of God” from eternity. That is to say, things are not regarded as good or evil in their own nature. Rather, good and evil are founded in the nature of God. According to Edwards, consequently, good and evil “appertain to his will, as well as his understanding.”¹¹¹

For Edwards, this claim is particularly confirmed by the fact that human beings own the right principle concerning good and evil in their minds. He asserts that since the notions of good and evil are essential to human minds and the mind of man is the image of God, one can naturally conclude that good and evil are founded in God.¹¹² Edwards therefore argues as follows:

Now, if these ideas and platforms of good and evil were in God’s most perfect nature and mind from all eternity, and were fix’d and determin’d by him, it is rational to think that he did will and decree that there should in time be actual examples of both these good and evil in the world. If God from everlasting constituted and settled the nature of evil, as well as good (as most certainly he did, and he could not do one without the other) we can’t help inferring thence that it might seem good to him to ordain and determine that there should be real instances of this in the lives and manners of men.¹¹³

In sum, according to Edwards, the reasons of good and evil “depend on the nature and will of God” and, accordingly, this proves God’s willing of sin and evil in the world.

Fourth, according to Edwards, right understanding of the nature of providence, specifically, that of the divine concurrence (*concursus divinas*) shows that God has willed the sin of mankind.¹¹⁴ He teaches that “God concurs to every act of his creature; that is,

¹¹¹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 162.

¹¹² Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 162.

¹¹³ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 163.

¹¹⁴ “Concursus” literally means “running along with.” However, the Thomists preferred the term, *praemotio physica*. Muller, *Dictionary*, 76-77. As for Edwards, both divine concurrence and physical premotion are interchangeably used in his writings. The doctrine of divine concurrence was fundamental especially in the 17th century Reformed theology. However, Whitby does not discuss the doctrine of premotion or concurrence in his writings. On the Reformed use of the idea of divine concurrence, see Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 256-61, 266-74; Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.V.VI, (505-515); Maccovius, *Loci Communes theologici* (Amstredam: 1667), XLVII-XLVII, 451-60; Cocceius, *Summa Theologica*, XII. xxviii, 218-220. Concerning the Thomistic understanding of divine premotion, see , A. M. Dummermuth, *St Thomas et doctrina praemotiois physicae seu & Responsio ad R.P. Schneemann, SJ, aliosques*

as it is physical act.” The assumption of this doctrine is that “every being hath the immediate dependence on God, not only as its existence, but as to the exercise of its faculties and powers.”¹¹⁵ Namely, while God is operative as a primary cause with all causes in the world, human beings as a secondary causality are neither the cause of their own being nor self-moved in an ultimate sense.¹¹⁶ In a word, every time something occurs, God’s causality is primary because he is the cause of his own being and ours. Edwards gives John 19:10-11 as an example: when Pilate said he had power to crucify Christ, Christ said that he could have no power at all against him, except it were given him from above.¹¹⁷ Edwards claims that the doctrine has been supported not only by the papists but also by Protestants and “men of all religions.”¹¹⁸

Nevertheless, Edwards firmly insists that evil and depravity of man are to be attributed entirely to “the depraved will of the man that doth it: and consequently he is the author of the evil, and not God.” He emphasizes that without concurring to evil, God concurs with the action “as it is natural.” In other words, God concurs to it “as it is

doctrinae scholae Thomisticae impugnatores (Paris: L’Annee Dominicaine, 1886); idem, *Defensio doarinae S. Thomae Aq. De praemotione physica seu Responsio ad R. P. V. Frins, SJ* (Louvain: Uystpruyst; Paris: Lethielleux, 1895); N. Del Prado, *De gratia et libero arbitrio, pars secunda: Concordia liberi arbitrii cum divina motione juxta S. Augustinum et D. Thomam* (Freiburg: Consociatio Sancti Pauli, 1907); Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *De deo uno: Commentarium in primam partem S. Thomae* (Paris: Desdee, 1938), 509-56; idem, *God, His Existence and His Nature: A Thomistic Solution of Certain Agnostic Antinomies*, 5th ed., vol. 2, trans. Bede Rose (Herder: St. Louis, 1941), 263-396; idem, *Predestination: The Meaning of Predestination in Scripture and the Church* (Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books and Publishers, 1998), 233-340; Thomas M. Osborne, “Thomist Premotion and Contemporary Philosophy of Religion,” *Nova et Vetera* 4 (2006): 607-632.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 163.

¹¹⁶ Thus, the notion is “a corollary of the doctrines of God as *primum movens* and of providence as *continuata creatio* that defines the continuing divine support of the operation of all secondary causes (whether free, contingent, or necessary).” Muller, *Dictionary*, 76. cf. Brakel, *Reasonable Service*, 336.

¹¹⁷ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 163-64.

¹¹⁸ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 163. In his writings, Edwards does not discuss the issue of the Jesuits, the Socinians and the Arminians’ idea of general and indifferent concurrence. In opposition to the Reformed, they all argue that God does not exercise any influence on men’s free actions in their beginning. Concerning the Reformed critique of it, see Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.IV.I-XIV (449-53); Venema, *Institutes*, 411-14.

merely an act, for as it is such, it is not vitious and culpable.” Thus, Edwards asserts that “God is the general cause and author of all our actions, and so far they are from him they are good.” In contrast, it is man himself who abuses this assistance and turns the action into “a moral evil.”¹¹⁹ Consequently, Edwards claims that the idea of divine concurrence clearly manifests God’s willing of human sin:

Now then, if the over-ruling providence of God extends to evil agents and their sinful actions, there is as good reason why we should assert that his eternal decree reaches to these. Seeing God in his infinite wisdom can and doth produce the greatest good out of the sinfulest works of men, we can’t but think that those works were the objects of God’s decree. Certainly it is not unworthy of God to determine from eternity to permit those actions which he concurs to in time.¹²⁰

Edwards advocates this argument with references not only to biblical texts such as Genesis 45:7 and Revelation 17:17 and but also to Augustine and Aquinas’ theological or philosophical arguments.¹²¹

Edwards discusses the Reformed doctrine of divine concurrence or premotion¹²² more substantially in his treatment of another critical issue in his debate with Whitby: specifically, if God has decreed something sinful or evil, how God’s purity and holiness can be maintained?¹²³ Edwards’ doctrine of divine concurrence is highly important not just because it supports the Reformed idea of God’s decree of sin but also because it specifically defies Whitby’s charge that Reformed doctrine of permission of sin impinges on God’s purity and mercifulness. As with the former, the latter is another core of the debate between Edwards and Whitby.

¹¹⁹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 164.

¹²⁰ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 165.

¹²¹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 164-67.

¹²² The term, “premotion,” particularly indicates its roots among Dominican opponents of Molina. Cf. Turretin, *Institutes* I, VI.IV.V

¹²³ Thus, I will deal with Edwards’ doctrine of divine concurrence in more detail in next section of this chapter.

In addition to these theological and philosophical arguments, Edwards discusses some controversial biblical passages such as Luke 22:22, Acts 2:23, and Acts 4:27-28 in order to support his argument on the issue.¹²⁴ Since they are significant texts for the debate with Whitby, he provides detailed interpretations of them. For instance, Edwards argues that Whitby perverted the meaning of Luke 22:22. Whitby in his *Annotations* insists that the verb ὀρισμενον refers to “prophesies” concerning the death of Christ. However, Edwards asserts that in the whole Scripture, one would find no case to favor Whitby’s interpretation. Rather, in other passages such as Acts 2:23; 10:42; 17:26, the same verb was used to refer to the decree. He also criticizes Grotius’ interpretation that this signifies “what was determined and devised by the high priests and elders.” Edwards insists against Grotius that the word ὀρίσθαι is of the same signification with προορίσθαι which is frequently applied to the divine decree. Hence, Edwards argues that God has decreed from eternity the permission of sin in the world.¹²⁵

Besides theological, philosophical, and exegetical arguments, Edwards also relies on tradition to advocate his claim. He lists many famous thinkers, including patristic, medieval, and contemporary writers such as Augustine, Prosper, Fulgentius, Anselm, Hugo of St. Victor, Bradwardine, Aquinas, Estius, Usher, Arminius, Rivet, Wallace, Jackson, Thorndike, Sherlock, and so on. Quoting their statements from original works, Edwards show they all agree with him that God has willed to permit human sin.¹²⁶

Finally, on the basis of these arguments, Edwards concludes that the existence of sin in the world and the fall of mankind are the will of God: “all human actions and events, even those that are sinful and vicious, are the object of the divine decrees; and there could be no sin, nor sinners in the world, if God did not decree the being of them

¹²⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 106-111.

¹²⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 106.

¹²⁶ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 186-95.

both.”¹²⁷ Nevertheless, Edwards affirms that even though divine permission of sin includes the will of God, God’s decree of sin has nothing to do with such decree that forces human beings to sin:

... and tho’ I had expressly asserted in that very discourse, where I used the foresaid language; that there are no decrees that necessitate men to sin, or consign them to damnation, without their own voluntary impiety and wickedness; that God hath no agency in the actions of men, as they are sinful; that there is no positive operation of his towards the evil of their doings; but the whole vitiosity and depravity of them is from themselves, that is, their depraved wills and nature; that God determines no man’s will to sin; and that it is impossible that he should be the cause and author of it. Notwithstanding all this, he fastens the opprobrious character of blasphemers upon me.¹²⁸

Edwards also holds that God did not decide to permit human beings to sin in order to damn them:

I declared further, that God doth not by his decree permit any man to sin, to the end that he may damn him; as if one were the means in order to the other. Nor did God decree to create men to damn them; but he decreed to damn them because they are sinners. The contrary to these might indeed be justly censur’d and condemned, as blasphemous positions; but I abhor them.¹²⁹

Herein, however, another question naturally flows out of the current discussion on the nature of the permission of sin: Why then did God permit sin of mankind? Regarding this question, Edwards comments as follows:

Seeing God in his infinite wisdom can and doth produce the greatest good out of the sinfulness of men, we can’t but think that those works were the objects of God’s decree.... So that the divine intention and operation are always good even about those things which are evil.¹³⁰

For Edwards, God could prevent evil, but nevertheless permits it, and he does it for a reason: out of that evil a greater good would come. Edwards backs up his position by

¹²⁷ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 169.

¹²⁸ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 120.

¹²⁹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 120.

¹³⁰ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 165.

references to Augustine's *Enchiridion* and Genesis 45:7. In particular, concerning the understanding of Genesis 45:7, he writes as follows:

It was by the divine administration that that wicked act was ordered for good. God may therefore be truly said to decree that action, and all the other evil actions of men, so far as he can and will bring good out of them. He doth not will any evil for itself, but for the consequences of it.¹³¹

Why then is it good for God to permit humanity's sin? Edwards argues that it is good because of two reasons: it is (1) conducive to God's glory and honor and (2) useful to human beings. As to the former, Edwards states as follows:

Again that evil should be in the world, is useful, and therefore God can will it as such. He wills it because it is conducive to his glory, and the welfare of mankind. These two particulars I will insist on. First I say, sin in the event of it conduces to God's glory and honour, and therefore it is not to be wonder'd at, that he willingly permits it to be. ... the glory of the divine mercy, justice and wisdom is display'd in this permission.¹³²

Edwards refers to Galatians 3:22 and Romans 11:32 to support his view:

There was, as it were, a necessity of our being concluded under sin and wrath, in order to our repairing to Christ for life. There could not have been a Redeemer, unless we had first sold ourselves. There could not have been a saviour, unless we had been a lost condition. To make way therefore the covenant of grace in Jesus Christ, and the evangelical dispensation, God was pleas'd to permit the fall of our first parents, and thinks fit to suffer the commission of sin in the world. For if there were not this latter, there could not have been the former.¹³³

According to Edwards, God could prevent sin, but decided to permit it in order to reveal his glory, mostly in the liberation of the world by Christ. Therefore, Edwards argues that "For the state of grace excels that of innocence."¹³⁴

¹³¹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 166.

¹³² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 112.

¹³³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 112-13.

¹³⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 113. Edwards adds that "For it was more conducing to the glory of God that our salvation should be by Christ's death, than that Adam should not have fallen, and all men in him." Ibid.

In addition to Christ, Edwards presents three specific reasons why the willing of sin contributes to the glory of God. First of all, he insists that without sin in this world, there would have been no place for the manifestation of God's justice. Edwards teaches that the permission of sin gives God "an opportunity" to exert His vindictive righteousness in imposing punishment on sinners. In other words, the justice of God is more "perspicuous" in permitting and decreeing sin, "because he punishes men with their own sins."¹³⁵ Second, Edwards asserts that God permits evil so that the true nature and reasons for good may be better discovered.¹³⁶ Third, Edwards claims the wisdom of God or the execution of God's holy counsels and purposes is most clearly manifested by this means. He explains this with an example of Judas' betrayal.¹³⁷ Judas certainly had a wrong intent in selling Christ to the high priest, but God turned it into good for the salvation of mankind. Likewise, God always has a good design in permitting evil, either to bring light out of darkness or to punish sin with its own consequences.

In addition to contributing to the glory of God, Edwards also argues that God's permission of evil actions in the world is conducive to the benefit of mankind. He attempts to prove it on several accounts.¹³⁸ First, because of sins, the godly realize how they are weak and how their own abilities are untrustworthy. Second, by being liable to sin, and by actually committing it, men are brought to feel their need of God's mercy, grace, and forgiveness with greater earnestness and sincerity. Third, the failings of the faithful make them humble and help remove their pride and confidence.¹³⁹ Fourth, since they are being left to themselves, and are thereby permitted to sin, the godly come to more fearfully and cautiously prepare themselves for the future. Fifth, the believers

¹³⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 114.

¹³⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 117.

¹³⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 115.

¹³⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 117.

¹³⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 118.

become more compassionate toward those who sin. Sixth, unless “irregularities of life” exist in this world, men would not be able to enact many virtues such as faith, hope, charity and patience. According to Edwards, these excellent virtues are “founded on the worst of vices.”¹⁴⁰ Seventh, Edwards thus states that “it is not unlikely that God had an eye to those good endowments, when he willed the permission of these vices in the world. It was not his pleasure that they should be wanting in man’s life.”¹⁴¹ To support the argument, Edwards quotes some philosophers such as Christiaan Huygens (1629-95) and Augustine.¹⁴²

In sum, Edwards states that God could prevent evil, but nevertheless permits it and does it for a reason:

... and we say moreover, that it is not unworthy of God to decree the being of sin; because there were great ends and purposes which induced him to it; namely, that good and benefit which rebounds to mankind out of it, that is, the incarnation of Christ, redemption by him, and all the happy consequences that attend it. It cannot be unworthy of God, to determine that that shall be which will give him occasion to manifest his wisdom, justice and goodness, in the most illustrious manner. It can’t be unworthy of God to decree that, which would be an occasion of putting man into a far better state than he was in at first. ... We do not say that sin is good; for that would confound the notions of good and evil, and destroy all religion; but we say, and have proved it, and shall further prove it in the following papers, that sin is made conducive to good by the divine management and conduct. And surely then, God may so far determine and ordain the commission of sin, as it can be made by him serviceable to that great end, and consequently conducive to his own glory, and the happiness of his creature.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 119.

¹⁴¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 119.

¹⁴² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 121-22. Cf. Edwards states that “For we must know that the same thing is a sin in respect of the person that commits it, and not a sin in respect of God that decreed it...” Ibid., 122. Edwards also writes that “God decreed to permit the being of error and heresies, and other disorders in the world, for he makes use of them for the exercising of the faith and patience of the godly, and for the trial of their sincerity and steadfastness. Tho’ those enormities and irregularities are bad, yet the suffering of them is good, because it is beneficial to the godly in this life. Heaven is a sinless state, but it seem’d good to God that there should be no such thing here, because he intended to produce good out of the evil of sin. Or take it thus, evil actions are decreed by him, and not without just cause, because evil, as it hath respect to the divine disposal and ordering of it, hath the notion of good.” Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 121.

¹⁴³ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 121.

In a word, Edwards gives a so-called “greater-good defense” for the existence of evil: out of that evil a greater good would come, a good that could not have come, or could not have been as great, if there had not been that evil.

This type of defense is found in other Reformed orthodox thinkers as well. For instance, Turretin presents three specific reasons why God decided to permit sin: without the permission of sin (1) God’s punitive justice and His pardoning mercy could not have discovered, (2) His wisdom by which God turns evil into good would not have manifested, and (3) God’s wonderful love manifested in sending Jesus Christ to the world could not have appeared. In a word, the permission of evil contributes to the glory of God.¹⁴⁴ Thus, he states that God by his wisdom and power “converts the evil into good and directs and draws it to a good end.”¹⁴⁵

Ridgeley also insists that the divine providence overrules sin for God’s own glory and for His people’s good.¹⁴⁶ He tries to prove his argument through several cases from the Bible. For example, men committed the vilest sin by crucifying Christ. However, the sin gave occasion to man’s salvation because God overruled it for saving His people from their sins. In this way, Ridgeley claims, God brings about great and valuable ends by human sin, which, at first view, have no apparent tendency to produce them. That is, God prevails over human sin and produces good out of it regardless of the intention of second causes.¹⁴⁷ Hence, Ridgeley states that this is “a wonderful display of his wisdom” which shows God’s “perfection.”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VII.IX (464).

¹⁴⁵ “Denique quoad finem, in ejus sapienti ordinatione et directione, dum praeter peccati naturam, et peccantis voluntatem, pro sapientia et potentia sua malum in bonum convertit, et ad bonum finem dirigit et deducit.” Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VII.XX (468).

¹⁴⁶ Ridgeley, *Commentary on Larger Catechism*, 360.

¹⁴⁷ Ridgeley, *Commentary on Larger Catechism*, 361.

¹⁴⁸ Ridgeley, *Commentary on Larger Catechism*, 360.

In a similar vein to Edwards and others, Gill suggests a positive reason why God has decreed to permit the sinful actions of mankind:

God permitted or suffered Adam to sin and fall, which permission was not a bare permission or sufferance; God was not an idle spectator of this affair; the permission was voluntary, wise, holy, powerful, and efficacious, according to the unchangeable counsel of his will: he willed, and he did not will the sin of Adam, in different respects; he did not will it as an evil, but as what he would overrule for good, a great good; he willed it not as sin, but as a mean of glorifying his grace and mercy, justice and holiness.¹⁴⁹

For Gill, as in the case of Joseph, God in His providence uses the evil deeds of mankind for the glory of God or for the benefit of His people.

Nevertheless, in their explanation of why God permits human sin, not all Reformed thinkers are content with the greater good defense. For example, Voetius maintains that the question of why God permits sin is “a useless question because the reason is hidden from us.”¹⁵⁰ He argues as follows:

Why would God will to permit that defect or that vice of act and why would He deny or would not will that vital act moreover is done by moral goodness and promote through the help of special grace to that perfection and kind and degree of excellence, (what He indeed can, although He is not bound to that), our foolish thinking murmurs in vain because it seeks its account (*rationem*) and cause (namely of the will of God) of which is of no account, as Augustine says: it is certainly of no [account] which indeed would be known to us.¹⁵¹

Thus, in his treatment of why God permits sin, Voetius does not favor the argument that God permits it for the sake of some good to be brought about through it. Rather admitting human knowledge is limited, even though he states that the permission of sin illustrates

¹⁴⁹ Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 227.

¹⁵⁰ Voetius, *Termino vitae*, 124.

¹⁵¹ “Quare autem Deus voluerit permittere illum defectum seu illud vitium actus, & quare negaverit seu non voluerit actum illum vitalem insuper morali bonitate perficere, & per auxilium gratiae specialis ad illam perfectionis atque eminentiae speciem & gradum promovere, (quod quidem potest, quamvis ad illud non teneatur) frustra murmurat insipiens cogitatio nostra, quia rationem & causam quaerit ejus (voluntatis scilicet divinae) cujus ratio nulla est, ut Augustinus loquitur: nulla scilicet est, quae nobis quidem sit cognita.” Voetius, *Termino vitae*, 124.

the glory of God,¹⁵² Voetius trusts the will of God without trying to scrutinize its possible reasons and ultimately leaves the question unanswered.

(2) The Second Issue: Can God's Purity and Holiness be Maintained in Spite of His Willing of Human Sin?

As already mentioned, the other main issue of the debate between Edwards and Whitby is whether God's purity and holiness can be sustained despite His decreeing of human sin. In fact, this issue naturally flows from previous discussion of divine decree of sin because if God has decreed sin, then it looks as if God is the cause of sin and evil in the world. Concerning this question, Whitby strongly argues that it is impossible for God to maintain purity and sanctity because His willing of human sin makes God the author of sin.¹⁵³ Thus, in order to advocate God's purity and holiness in spite of His willing of sin, Edwards tries to prove why God is not the author of sin, even though God has decreed sin of mankind.

First of all, Edwards argues that God should not be regarded as the author of sin because making God the author of sin is against the right concept and nature of sin. He maintains that sin is the transgression of the divine law. However, God cannot transgress His law or act contrary to His own will. Thus, he asserts that ascribing the author of sin to God nulls the notion of the law. Moreover, Edwards insists that if God is the author of sin, God cannot justly punish it. That is, God's being the author of sin necessarily implies that men are compelled to sin without any freedom of their own. However, punishment should suppose a voluntary crime and thereby men's acts cannot be considered as crimes or faults.¹⁵⁴ Edwards clearly states that even though God does not hinder human sin as "a sovereign Lord," he hinders it "as he forbids it, and commands the contrary; and threatens

¹⁵² "... quia & permissio peccati, & poena unum idemque integrale medium constituunt ad finem a Deo destinatum, illustratione, scilicet gloriae sue." Voetius, *Termino vitae*, 119.

¹⁵³ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 181.

¹⁵⁴ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 80.

the actors with punishment... in short he uses all proper means and expedients to prevent sin.”¹⁵⁵

Second, Edwards insists that since God actualizes what He has decreed concerning humanity’s sin by withholding or withdrawing His grace from human beings, God is not the author of sin. More specifically, God denies bestowing “the help of the Spirit” by which alone human beings can do what is truly good and holy. As a result of depriving them of His grace, they are left to themselves without God’s enlightening their understanding or inclining their wills.¹⁵⁶ Consequently, human beings sin by their own fault without any coercion or force and thus God cannot be said to be the author of sin.¹⁵⁷ To elucidate this, Edwards presents several examples such as Pharaoh’s hardening of his heart and Rehoboam’s hearkening to evil counsel. He maintains that Pharaoh and others hardened their heart and sinned by their own fault even though they were left to themselves without assistance of God’s grace.¹⁵⁸ Thus, the responsibilities of their hardening are not in God but in human beings.

Third, Edwards claims that like the case of Psalm 105:24-25, God sometimes puts such occasions and objects before men, whereby they are kindled to their sinful desires

¹⁵⁵ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 80.

¹⁵⁶ For the detailed Reformed explanation of God’s desertion (*desertio*), see Turretin, *Institutio* I, V.X.V.

¹⁵⁷ Concerning this, Turretin comments that “Hujus autem desertionis causa est semper justa et sancta penes Deum; ... Interim causalitas ejus non potest Deo ulla ratione impingi, quia per desertionem illam, nec coegit illum ad lapsum, nec inspiravit ipsi voluntatem labendi, nec abstulit gratiam ullam internam in creatione datam, sed tantum denegavit indebitam gratiam confirmationis non data, ex liberrimo voluntatis suae beneplacito, quo de suo dispensat ut vult, liber aeque donorum suorum negator ac largitor. Licet autem necessitas lapsus cum negatione istius gratiae fuerit, non sublata fuit tamen libertas et spontaneitas hominis peccantis, sed tantum ostensum, Deum voluisse, ut certo laberetur. Verum ut Deus eum certo labi voluit, ex aeterno suo decreto, ita simul liberrime eum labi voluit, nec magis ob negatum istum Dei concursum ad ejus actuale perseverantiam desiit ipsius lapsus esse liberrimus, quam ob liberrimum Dei concursum cum causa necessaria, desinit operatio istius causae esse necessaria, vel naturalis.” Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VII.XIII (465).

¹⁵⁸ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 81.

and actions.¹⁵⁹ However, he firmly asserts that even if God gives men such circumstances “as administer unto sin,” the responsibility of sin is entirely man’s fault and God cannot be blamed as the author of sin. Edwards discusses Pharaoh’s case in detail. He teaches that God set the occasion for Pharaoh to harden his heart. However, Edwards states that “God was the cause of Pharaoh’s obduration, as he gave him the occasion for it, but such a one, as he might have made use of to a contrary purpose.” For example, in Exodus 8:15 and 9:34, God stops continually punishing Pharaoh with the frogs and, thunder and hail. Nevertheless, according to Edwards, the goodness of God which should have led Pharaoh to repentance made a contrary influence upon him and made him obstinate and rebellious. That is, Pharaoh “willfully abused” God’s grace and became even more stubborn by God’s merciful discontinuance of punishment. Thus, he maintains that even though “God was the cause of Pharaoh’s obduration, as he gave him the occasion for it, but such a one, as he might have made use of to a contrary purpose,” the true cause of Pharaoh’s induration was “his abuse of God’s clemency.”¹⁶⁰ Edwards cites Tillotson and Arminius to support his view on this matter.¹⁶¹

Fourth, Edwards maintains that “God acts in reference to the evil actions of men, by giving the actors up to Satan, to be assaulted and tempted by him.” He thus argues that the evil spirit is the true author of sin. Edwards relies on several biblical passages to defend this opinion. For instance, he cites 2 Samuel 24:1 and 1 Chronicles 21:1. Edwards states that these passages show that God made use not only of David but also Devils in the administrations of his providence. However, he claims that David voluntarily revolted from his duty, and thereby it was just for God to deliver him up to Satan. Accordingly,

¹⁵⁹ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 81-82. Cf. Ridgeley, *Commentary on the Larger Catechism*, 359. Turretin teaches that the efficacy of providence appears in three ways (1) the offering of occasions (oblatio occasionum), (2) the delivering over to Satan (traditio Satanae), and (3) the immediate operation of God in the heart (immediate Dei in corde operatio). Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VII.XVI (466-67).

¹⁶⁰ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 82.

¹⁶¹ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 83.

Edwards asserts that God is not the author of sin because David willfully committed sin by the instigation of Satan.¹⁶²

Fifth, Edwards teaches that “God willeth and promoteth some vitious dispositions and actions of men, as they are a due penalty of former offences.” Namely, since God sometimes makes one sin for the punishment of another, God is not the author of sin. Edwards uses God’s hardening of Pharaoh’s heart in Exodus to elucidate this claim. He asserts that this incident indicates not only withholding grace, and setting occasions of sin before Pharaoh, but also making one sin in the way of punishment.¹⁶³ Enumerating many biblical passages to support his argument, Edwards concludes that the evil of sin as the evil of punishment is “good; because it is the effect of divine justice: and consequently God may have some hand in it, and yet not be the author of sin.”¹⁶⁴

Sixth, Edwards claims that in His willing of sin, God does not will sin directly; God does not will it as He wills good because “his will is the direct cause of the existence of all things that are good, and of the goodness of them.” Thus, he argues that since no goodness is in sin, God cannot be said to will it “directly and as it is such”¹⁶⁵ Instead, Edwards explains the nature of the decree of sin as follows:

But when we assert the universal extent of God’s will, we hold that God doth not will the being of moral evil, as he wills good; that is, directly, and for it self. In itself consider’d, that is, as to its intrinsick nature, it can’t be will’d or decreed; for in itself and its formal nature, it hath nothing that can make it fit to be the object of the divine will. Wherefore God doth not simply and absolutely decree the being of sin, he wills it not primarily, but secondarily, occasionally, respectively; that is, with relation to something else: He wills it only so far as he is able to order and dispose it to great and good purposes; yea, even to his own glory. Thus, if there were any ingenuity and fairness in our adversaries, they would let us distinguish, as well as do it themselves, and as the Holy Scripture (as we have heard) hath taught us to distinguish. In short, I

¹⁶² Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 83.

¹⁶³ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 83. See also Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 103. Cf. Concerning how hardening and blinding are ascribed to God, see Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VII.XXVIII (471).

¹⁶⁴ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 84.

¹⁶⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 106.

bring the business to this issue with our adversaries; God did will that sin should be committed, or he will'd it should not be committed. If he will'd this latter, then there would be no sin committed in the world: but we see this confuted by the perpetual practice of men. If he will'd the former, that is, that sin should be committed, then there is an end of the controversy, and the Dr. is silenc'd forever.¹⁶⁶

Here, Edwards clearly maintains that God does not decree sin in its own nature. Rather, the nature of God's decree of human sin is not absolute or simple but secondary, occasional, and respective.

Edwards further clarifies this secondary and remote nature of God's decreeing of sin by the doctrine of divine concurrence or premotion. As discussed already, Edwards advocates God's willing of sin through the doctrine of divine concurrence. Following the Thomist tradition, he teaches that "the general power of thinking and willing, and the natural faculty of doing anything are from God, and his peculiar gift." Thus, Edwards states that human beings can neither exist nor act or operate without divine influence. However, for the case of sinful action of mankind, he reaffirms that God concurs "with the bare act of vice, tho' not with the evil of it." Edwards explains as follows:

He stirs up that power in us, which he gave us to act, and he also concurs with the act. As the faculty is from him, so is the operation. And this is true of every operation, whether good or bad: as it is a natural action, it is from God. The reason is, because the natural action, as such is not sinfull: and therefore, tho' God determines a man to the natural action, yet it follows not, that he determines him to the sin that accompanies that action. ... Though God, as the universal cause of all natural effects in the world, and as the upholder and sustainer of men's blessings, influences on all humane actions, yea the bad as well as the good, (for those have a natural consideration as well as a moral one) yet, the evil of the actions springs from their own depraved wills, from the corrupt motions of their own minds.¹⁶⁷

Indeed, for Edwards, understanding of the distinction between physical acts and depravity of them is the key to solve the issue.¹⁶⁸ Edwards elaborates this further as follows:

¹⁶⁶ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 154. Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 103. .

¹⁶⁷ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 84.

¹⁶⁸ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 84-85.

The act itself, barely consider'd, proceeds from God; to deny this, is to deny the dependency of the creature upon God: but that which makes it sinful is from men. And what is that? The will of men. The evil of the work consists in the evil design and contriving of it, not in the mere doing of it. The act, which in itself is good, must be distinguish'd from the evil that accompanies it: for these two are really distinct things.¹⁶⁹

Using an analogy of the sword to explain this, Edwards affirms that sin consists “not in the deed or action itself, but in the disorder, the inordinacy, the depravity that attends it.”¹⁷⁰ In other words, the nature of good and evil consists “not in the bare action, but in the manner of it.” He asserts that an action is evil when it deviates from the right manner. Thus, Edwards asserts that when the act is “fixed and terminated,” there is good or evil in it.¹⁷¹

Edwards also uses an analogy of theft and adultery to show that the action and the evil can be separated; “The vitiosity then of the acts depends on particular and peculiar circumstances and objects, about which they are conversant.” He cites Moses’ counting of the Israelites in Numbers 1:1-2 and David’s numbering the people in 2 Samuel 18:1. According to Edwards, even though the actions are the same for both Moses and David, the circumstances altered the cases and thus it shows that “the bare act and the sin are two distinct things.”¹⁷² He further states as follows:

...and consequently, that God himself may be concerned (as necessarily he must be, as the universal cause which actuates all things, by an uninterrupted concourse and influx) in the outward act or event in wicked enterprises, but he never is interested in the vitiosity of them. God is not the moral cause or author, but he is the physical cause or author of every vitious act, because the agent could not act without his aid.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 85.

¹⁷⁰ Likewise, using a sword is a natural act, which is not evil in itself. Yet, when someone uses it in order to kill someone, the evil intention makes the act sinful. Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 85. Even though Edwards does not use the terminology of habits, this may be illustrated more by the term in that an evil habit of the will distorts its inclinations.

¹⁷¹ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 86.

¹⁷² Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 86.

¹⁷³ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 86.

In this way, Edwards distinguishes between the physical cause and moral cause:

We must distinguish between the bare act and the vitiosity of it, and we must hold that God is the cause of the one, and man of the other. God concurs with the natural or metaphysical goodness of every operation (for in an action or operation morally evil, there is a physical and metaphysical goodness) but we ourselves are the sole authors, of the irregularity and obliquity of the action.¹⁷⁴

Indeed, Edwards maintains that God is not the moral cause of sin in the sense of a providential *praemotio physica*. Thus, he affirms that “God is the author of the act, as physically considered.” Regarding this, Edwards states as follows:

God wills the being of sin, or that sin shall be, but he willeth not sin so as to approve of it in its own nature. He doth not absolutely and simply will any sin, as it is barely an evil action, but he wills and concurs to the action, as it is a mere physical action. Again, he wills sin as it is order’d and directed by his over-ruling providence and wisdom to good ends. Thus, tho’ sin be not good, yet that there should be sin, is good, yea necessary, as I shall demonstrate afterwards. Moreover, God wills sin as it is (and that frequently) the punishment of evil actions, because, as it is such, it is good; that is, it is an act of justice. In all these respects God is truly said to will sin.¹⁷⁵

In sum, Edwards maintains that God can concur with the human act without being involved in the unlawfulness. Consequently, for him, since evil acts are properly men’s own acts, they themselves are the authors of them.

Here it will be helpful for the understanding of Edwards’ position on the issue to consider other Reformed scholastics’ view of divine concurrence. They basically take the same position as Edwards on how God’s providence is related to sinful deeds through His concurrence. For example, Turretin, in a similar vein to Edwards, argues that God’s

¹⁷⁴ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 87.

¹⁷⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 103. He also states that “God cannot will or promote sin.... But he can and doth concur to the bare act of sin, even that act, which by man’s evil mind and depraved temper is vitious: but he doth not concur to it, as it is vitious: and consequently he is not the cause of the obliquity of the act, tho’ he be the cause of the act itself.” Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 84. He similarly states that “to will sin so as to approve of it, and to delight in it, is not reconcilable with the holiness and purity of God; but to will it so, as to consent that sin shall be by his permission, is very reconcilable.” Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 183.

premotion pertains only to the actions “inasmuch as they are material and entitative, not however as they are moral, i.e., to the substance of the act, but not to its wickedness.”¹⁷⁶

To elaborate, as with Voetius, Turretin distinguishes three different aspects of sin: (1) “the entity itself of the act,” (2) “the disorder (ἀταξία) and wickedness joined with it,” and (3) the consequent judgment of sin.¹⁷⁷ The distinction of three aspects of sin allows Turretin to argue that God’s concurrence relates in different ways to the different aspects of the human sinful act. As to the first, he argues that “since an act as such is always good as to its entity,” God concurs only to the entity of the act itself “effectively and physically, not only by conserving the nature, but by exciting its motions and actions by a physical motion, as being good naturally.”¹⁷⁸ As to the lawlessness (ἀνομία) itself, however, God is neither its physical cause nor ethical cause.¹⁷⁹ Using analogies such as the order of the death penalty by the magistrate, Turretin instead claims that wickedness proceeds from “a deficient created will” and thus human will as a moral agent is the moral cause of humanity’s sin.¹⁸⁰ He, therefore, states as follows:

¹⁷⁶ “Quamvis praemotio Dei extendatur ad actiones malas, non propterea Deum facit culpa reum, vel authore peccati; Quia illa tantum pertinet ad actiones, quatenus materialiter et entitative se habent, non vero moraliter, id. ad actus substantiam, sed non ad ejus malitiam: Nec novum est, ut una eademque actio diversimode consideretur, vel physice, vel moraliter; ...” Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.V.XVI (457).

¹⁷⁷ “Primo in peccato tria accurate distinguenda sunt. 1. Ipsa entitas actus, quae habet rationem materialis. 2. ἀταξία et malitia cum eo conjuncta, vel eum concomitans, quae induit notionem formalis. 3. Judicium consequens, quod dicitur adjunctum.” Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VII.III (462).

¹⁷⁸ “Deus diversimode versatur circa ista. Nam ad primum quod attinet, cum actus qua talis semper bonus sit quoad entitatem suam, Deus ad illum concurrat effective, et physice, non modo naturam conservando, sed motus etiam ejus et actiones ciendo motione physica, utpote quae sunt bona...” Turretin, *Institutio* I, 462.

¹⁷⁹ “Quoad secundum, quod est ipsa ἀνομία, Deus nec causa physica potest ejus dici, quia nec illam inspirat, aut infundit, nec facit; nec ethica, quia nec imperat, aut approbat, et suadet, sed severissime prohibet et punit ...” Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VII.IV (462-63).

¹⁸⁰ “... quia voluntas, ut agens physicum, est causa physica actus, sed ut agens morale, est causa moralis malitiae, non impliciter quia actum producit sed quia actum talem producit contra legem, cui obnoxius homo erat; Causa ergo cur malitia imputetur voluntati humanae, non est simpliciter quia producit actum in genere entis, ut agens physicum, sed quia est homo legi subditus, qui producit actum vetitum, quia agens morale. Unde malitia moralis non sequitur intrinsece et ex natura rei ad actum, ut actus est in genere naturae, sed ut procedit a voluntate creata deficiente, cui proinde, non Deo, debet tribui causalitas peccati. Deinde ratio non minus militat contra concursum simultaneum, quam contra praevium, quia juxta illum

In evil actions, however, he so concurs as neither to effect, assist, nor approve of them, but to permit and efficaciously direct; not by infusing wickedness, but by so determining rational creatures physically to the substance of the act in the genus of being, that they (when left to themselves failing from the law) move and determine themselves to bad actions in the genus of morals, performing them freely and voluntarily (ἰχουσιως).¹⁸¹

He also argues that one and the same action can be distinguished in different ways, either physically or morally, and God concurs only with physical acts.¹⁸²

Brakel also distinguishes between the natural activity itself and sinfulness accompanying it:

One needs to make a distinction between the activity itself, such as understanding, willing, seeing, hearing, speaking, working, and the context in which this activity must occur: the law of God. The activity itself is natural and as such neither good nor evil; however when viewed within the context of the law, according to which it ought to be judged as far as subject, time, and manner are concerned, this activity becomes either good or evil. When discussing God's cooperation [*concursum*] we understand this to refer to the natural dimensions of this activity or motion itself. This is neither true, however, in reference to the misuse of this activity, to the lack of conformity to the law, nor to the evil in this activity. One person can be the cause of activity in another person, but not of the evil which accompanies it.¹⁸³

Deus concurrat etiam vere et efficienter ad actum materiale peccati, ergo debet etiam esse causa malitiae, quae illi est annexa." Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.V.XVI (457).

¹⁸¹ "In malis vero ita concurrat, ut neque ea efficiat, adjuvet, aut approbet, sed permittat, et efficaciter dirigat, non infundendo malitiam, sed creaturas rationales ita determinando physice ad actus substantiam in genere entis, ut ipsae sibi relictas deficiendo a lege seipsas moveant et determinant ad malas actiones in genere moris, libere et ἰχουσιως eas perpetrando; unde culpa in eas solas cadit, a qua Deus prorsus est immunis, ut fusius in sequenti quaestione probabitur." Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VI.VIII (461).

¹⁸² Thus, Turretin maintains that in every moral action "the substance of the act in the genus of being" and "the goodness and wickedness of the same in the genus of morals" should be distinguished: "Cum in omni actione morali necessario distinguenda sit substantia actus in genere entis, ab ejusdem bonitate vel malitia in genere moris, actio intelligendi et volendi simpliciter, quae habet rationem materialis, ab actione intelligendi et volendi hoc vel illud objectum licitum vel illicitum, quae habet rationem formalis; patet nullam actionem posse dici essentialiter bonam vel malam, se tantum prout est hic et nunc circumstantiata in genere moris, id. cum σχεσει ad hoc vel illud objectum morale bonum vel malum..." Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.V.XVII (457 -58).

¹⁸³ Brakel, *Reasonable Service* I, 341.

Thus, Brakel claims that whereas God concurs to the activity itself, human beings' inner corruption spoils it. For him, therefore, the cause of sin should be attributed not to God but to mankind.¹⁸⁴

In a similar way to Edwards and others, Gill holds that one sinful act can be distinguished into the natural act and the moral act or the act itself and “the ataxy, disorder, irregularity, and vitiosity of it.” Gill argues that God concurs to an action, barely considered, because nothing can be done without God. However, he insists that God cannot concur with “it as sin, or for the sake of itself.” Thus, God cannot be chargeable with being the author or approver of sin.¹⁸⁵

Ridgeley takes the same view as Edwards. Even though he does not explicitly mention the scholastic term, divine concurrence or premotion, Ridgeley's discussion of how the providence of God concurs to evil actions clearly shows that he is employing the idea of it. Like Edwards, Turretin, and Brakel, he argues that one must distinguish “between what is natural and what is sinful” in an action in order to understand the matter. Ridgeley particularly uses several “similitudes” to elaborate this. For example, if the motion of a horse is generated by the whip of the rider and it consequently causes lameness for the horse, “the defect or halting which it has in its motion, proceeds from an inward indisposition in the horse, and not from the rider.” Similarly, he argues, the providence of God may be “conversant” about that which is natural in an evil deed, without making God the author or approver of sin.¹⁸⁶

A similar approach with Edwards and other Reformed thinkers is also manifested in Van Mastricht's writing. Like Voetius, he regards the main characteristic of sin as lawlessness (*ἀνομία*) or *aliquid privativum*. In particular, he distinguishes two aspects of

¹⁸⁴ Brakel, *Reasonable Service* I, 341.

¹⁸⁵ Gill, *Body of Divinity*, 52-53. Gill also distinguishes an act and its obliquity and argues that the latter is from man: “the obliquity and irregularity of the action, as it swerves from the rule of God's law, is from man.” *Ibid.*, 215.

¹⁸⁶ Ridgeley, *Commentary on Larger Catechism*, 359.

a sinful action: a formal side which refers to the lawlessness and a material side which indicates the substratum of the act.¹⁸⁷ On the consideration of this distinction, Van Mastricht clearly argues that God is the efficient cause of the physically good substratum of the sinful action, not the lawlessness itself:

We can however properly reconcile [this] if we distinguish in sin its material—namely the habit, or act of evil undergirding [it], for which reason, inasmuch as it is physically good, God must concur—as the efficient cause, without a foundation for its own independence (Acts 18:28, Romans 11:36), and its formal cause, lawlessness (1 John 3:4), through which an act or habit is sin: [God] the one who constituted the law cannot be its author because He cannot transgress the law; nor is God the author of sin through His own providence; because that lawlessness, which is nothing except a lack of operation (*defectus operationis*), of which he is not the author or the efficient cause, but only can exist as the deficient cause, by which reason alone, to the extent that there is such an author of sin, it is the creature, by transgressing the law.¹⁸⁸

Consequently, Van Mastricht maintains that since God concurs only with the substratum of the act, God is not the author of sin. In sum, Edwards and many other Reformed writers agree that even though God concurs with evil actions, it does not make God guilty of the fault. They avoid this charge by explaining how God's concurrence is related to the different dimension of a sinful act.

Finally, Edwards claims that it is not inconsistent with the purity and holiness of God to will and decree the permission of sin in the world because God orders and directs

¹⁸⁷ “[Reformati] ... agnoscunt item, peccatum non esse negativum quid: sed negant esse aliquid reale, substantiale aut positivum quid; verum esse aliquid privatim, quod consistat in sola ἀνομία, seu absentia rectitudinis moralis, in subjecto capaci. Quia: I Johannes I Epist. iii, 4, peccatum, quam accuratissime definit per solam ἀνομίαν ἢ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία. 2. Quia si esset aliquid reale, substantiale aut positivum, necessario requireret Deum sui auctorem: cum prima causa omnis rea/ī, substantialis et positive, auctor sit. Nec 3. partibus constat, substrata velut materia, et ἀνομία seu forma: sic enim Deus saltem ex parte fieret auctor peccati, quatenus materialis, procul dubio auctor existit.” (IV, c. 2, 21), 347.

¹⁸⁸ “... possumus tamen satis commode conciliare, si distinxerimus in peccato ejus materiale, habitum scil. aut actum malitiae substratum, ad quod, utpote physice bonum, Deus non potest non concurrere, ut efficiens causa, citra jacturam suae independentia Act. xviii 28, Rom. Xi 36. et ejus formale, ἀνομία I Joh. iii 4. per quod actus aut habitus est peccatum: hujus auctor esse non potest, quia legem transgredi nequit, supra omnem legem constitutus; nec per per providentiam suam auctor sit; quia ἀνομία illa, non est nisi defectus operationis, cujus non auctor aut efficiens, sed deficiens tantum causa existere potest, qua ratione sola, peccati quatenus talis, auctor est creatura, transg[r]ediendo legem.” Van Mastricht, *Theoretico practica theologia*, III, 10, 18. 382.

them to the most holy ends. That is to say, “The difference that makes the creature’s act a sin and keeps God’s concurrence holy, is the end of sin, which is different for the sinning creature and for God who directs and rules over sin.” In this regard, he argues that the evil of a sinful act consists not in God’s act as first and universal cause but in “a defect and deformity of the action of the creature.” Edwards asserts that God judges the wicked for their bad motives, and His judgment is right because their evil motives are entirely within their control and from the evil affection of their hearts. On the contrary, as already examined, God permits evil acts of the creatures for God’s glory and benefits for Human beings. Accordingly, he maintains that because of the good and holy motivation, God’s decreeing of sin is good and reconcilable with His sanctity and goodness.¹⁸⁹

As with Edwards, other Reformed brethren also frequently employ the argument of the different end of sin. Turretin claims that even though the one and the same action is ascribed to God, to the Devil and the wicked, it is ascribed to them in different ways: “to God indeed as a most holy work because from a good principle it tends to a good end; to men, however, as most wicked because from an evil principle, by evil means, they tend to an evil end.”¹⁹⁰ Simply speaking, for him, final cause makes difference of actions. Turretin, therefore, teaches that even though there are many causes of the same effect, such effect is regarded as good with respect to the good causes or evil with respect to the evil.¹⁹¹ In this sense, Turretin claims that God cannot be said to be the author of sin.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 182. cf. Augustine, *Enchiridion*, XXVI. 100-101.

¹⁹⁰ “Et si quando idem opus Deo, Diabolo, et impiis tribuitur, ut Josephi venditio, induratio Pharaonis, Jobi calamitas, deceptio Achabi, numeratio populi, mors Christi, diversimode tamen utrisque adscribitur, Deo quidem, ut sanctissimum opus, quia a bono principio, ad bonum finem tendit; Hominibus vero, ut pessimum, quia a malo principio, malis mediis, ad malum finem tendunt.” Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VII.VII (463).

¹⁹¹ “Notum autem causas impulsivas et finales facere actionum discrimina, et quando ejusdem effectus plures causae sunt, aliae bonae, aliae malae, effectum illum respectu causarum bonarum bonum esse, respectu malarum malum.” Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VII.VII (463).

¹⁹² Cf. Voetius, *Termino vitae*, 122-23; Melchior Leydecker, *Disputatio theologica inauguralis de providential Dei* (Leiden: Elsevier, 1675), 22-23; Wollebius, *Compendium theologiae christianae*, 48-49.

In addition to these theological and philosophical arguments concerning the nature of the divine willing of human sin, as is usual with him in the controversy with Whitby, Edwards uses the testimonies of famous figures in church tradition.¹⁹³ For example, he asserts that Augustine takes side with him on this issue, and it is clearly shown in his debates with Julianus and other Pelagians. He also cites the Reformed thinkers like Antonius Walaeus, Andreae Rivetus, and Pierre Du Moulin to support his argument that God's permission of sin can be compatible with His purity and holiness.¹⁹⁴ In particular, to defend his view of divine premotion as a protector of God's sanctity in spite of His willing of sin, Edwards insists that many medieval scholastic thinkers such as Aquinas and Alvarez agree with him, and even Arminius and Socinus follow the distinction between the bare act and sin. Thus, Edwards insists that "it is not Geneva only that holds this special and immediate concurrence," but even the most eminent thinkers in the history of Christianity "say as much as the Calvinists do concerning God's acting with reference to sin."¹⁹⁵ Hence, Edwards states that if he were a blasphemer, all these religious and learned writers were blasphemers.¹⁹⁶

Moreover, even though he does not give further information, Edwards insists that "our clergy of the Church of England, and of a whole convocation of bishops and others of the Church of Ireland" agree with him on the issue. He also argues that *the Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England* clearly affirms Edwards' idea of the relation between divine decree and human sin. Thus, he argues, Whitby's argument that Edwards' view is not seen by any other divines except William Twiss cannot be warranted at all.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹³ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 186-95.

¹⁹⁴ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 190-192.

¹⁹⁵ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 86.

¹⁹⁶ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 187; 189; 190.

¹⁹⁷ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 197-98.

In addition, Edwards claims, Whitby's charge that Calvin and his followers make God the author of sin is groundless. To refute Whitby, he mentions several of England's bishops such as Abbot, Morton, Field, and Hakewill who thoroughly examined Calvin's teaching on sin and declared the innocence of them to the charge. Furthermore, Edwards also quotes Calvin's own statement that it is a nasty blasphemy to say that God is the author of sin. Thus, Edwards maintains that Whitby's argument against Calvin and his successors cannot be accepted.¹⁹⁸

III. What is the True Cause of Sin?

1. The True Cause of Sin

If God is not the author of sin, what is the true cause of human sin? Without blaming God, Edwards claims that the true cause of sin is "a natural malignity in man's temper," "the depraved nature of man," and "the free and voluntary motion of the soul."¹⁹⁹ In a word, for Edwards, the cause of sin should be ascribed to the depraved will of mankind. Regarding this, he states that "For the root and formal reason of sin, lies in the free and voluntary motion of the soul. There is no vitiosity without the will, and where ever you find a vice, it proceeds from the will."²⁰⁰ His basic point is that human beings are the author of sin because they freely sinned without any force on them. In opposition to Whitby, therefore, Edwards clearly argues that even though God decreed sin and it must come to pass by reason of that decree, God's decree must not be blamed as the cause of sin.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 198.

¹⁹⁹ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 86-87. Edwards states that "There is no vitiosity without the will, and where ever you find a vice, it proceeds from the will." Ibid., 87.

²⁰⁰ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 87. Cf. Augustin states that "we must in no way doubt that the only cause of the good things that come our way is the goodness of God, while the cause of our evils is the will of a changeable good falling away from the unchangeable good, first the will of an angel, then the will of a human being." Augustin, *Enchiridion*, VIII, 23. Quoted from Augustine of Hippo, *The Augustine Catechism, The Enchiridion on Faith, hope, and Love* (New York: New City Press, 1999), 56.

Concerning the nature of human sin, Edwards insists that if human beings are forced to sin, they cannot be blamed for their sin.²⁰² However, since they have freely and voluntarily sinned without any compulsion, they are responsible and culpable for their sins:

... there is no force at all in it; for it is not the necessity of sinning, that makes God the author of it; but it is the personal acting it that gives denomination to the author of it, and that is not God but man. The man acts freely, as it is an act of his own, and from his will, and thence it is that he is the author of the sin committed: But God only fore-determines that such a sin shall be in the world, and this fore-determination is no cause of the sin. ... The eternal decree is the cause of the necessary futurity of evil acts, so far as it is impossible that those acts should not be, for the acts inevitably follow on the decree. But the act itself is not necessary, but free and voluntary, and therefore God is not the author of it, but he that is the immediate agent, is the author. The fault lies in mens wills: they are guilty and culpable, not because of the decrees, but because of their wills. They voluntarily refuse to consult their own well-fare and happiness, and they reject all the means used for that purpose; and so sin is the free and unconstrain'd offspring of their own wills.²⁰³

Indeed, for Edwards, the fault consists not in God but in human will. In order to support this argument, he once again uses the distinction between the certainty of event and necessity of coaction.²⁰⁴ On this consideration, Edwards maintains that human action is always free though it is necessary according to the decree:

But let him disprove this if he can, that a man's actions may be unavoidable, and in that sense necessary, and at the same time free and voluntary in respect of the actions

²⁰¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 123.

²⁰² "We can't be faulty if we be necessitated and compell'd, for then the action, (on which the fault depends) is not ours; and if it be not ours, we ought not to be blamed. For it is unreasonable to lay that to our charge, which we did not act. This plainly shew that where there is not election there is no crime, and consequently no blameableness." Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 262.

²⁰³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 125. Edwards also states that "Man's own depraved will is the cause of the actions and the decree hath no causal influx upon them, or upon him." Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 184.

²⁰⁴ "For he tediously insists upon this that the fixing of a certain time, and other circumstances, makes all actions necessary, and therefore void of choice and all willingness; when as every one of ordinary capacity knows how to make a difference between necessity, as it signifies the certainty of the event, and necessity, as it imports coaction and force. The divine decree renders men's action necessary in the former respect, because the actions will certainly and infallibly be done; but not in the latter, for there is force and compulsion on the will, so as to violate the freedom of it." Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 204.

themselves, which proceed from the free principle in him: and it is this that makes the actions good or bad.²⁰⁵

Consequently, Edwards asserts that “sinners are the authors, the true and proper authors of their sins as well as of their destruction.”²⁰⁶ Namely, he concludes that the sinful mind of human beings is the cause of sin:

All actions and events are necessary with regard to the certainty of their coming to pass, and consequently all evil actions are so; but they are not necessary as to their immediate principle, the mind of man from whence they issue. Which clears up the whole controversy; and informs us, that the depraved mind of man, which is free as to its operation, is the cause of all sinful actions and that it is very ignorantly said of the Dr that there must be a necessary cause, in this sense, of that depravation; and that there must be a cause that necessitates, that is, compels the depraved will to act.²⁰⁷

In sum, even though the will of God is the necessity of all things in that the wicked can do nothing without God’s decision, God is not the author of evil because, in the level of proximate cause, human beings sin voluntarily. According to Edwards, they are in no way forced by any act of God, “either from eternity or in time.”²⁰⁸ For him, therefore, the freedom of man’s will is “the foundation of sin and that of God’s permission of sin.”²⁰⁹ Edwards states that God made human beings free creatures and “it is no wonder that man made use of his freedom, and sinned; that is err’d from good and did evil.” He teaches that “peccability is as it were of our very nature, whilst we are in these earthly tabernacles.”²¹⁰

²⁰⁵ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 205.

²⁰⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 126.

²⁰⁷ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 205.

²⁰⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 126.

²⁰⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 111.

²¹⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 111.

Virtually all other Reformed thinkers agree with Edwards that mankind is the cause of sin.²¹¹ For example, Turretin insists that if God compels human beings to sin by either making good wills bad or leading them willing and unwilling or inciting them morally to evil as evil “by precept or suasion,”²¹² God is the cause of sin. However, he argues that God’s decreeing of sin brings a necessity of consequence or hypothetical necessity and conspires with human free choice. Thus, Turretin claims that since human beings choose to do evil by their free choice, they are the author of sin and are responsible for their iniquities.²¹³

More specifically, in order to show that mankind is the author of sin, Turretin discusses how divine concurrence influences human actions without taking away human free choice at all. Admitting that human beings in the world cannot perfectly understand this matter,²¹⁴ Turretin presents four propositions to reveal how God’s concurrence does not eliminate human free choice. First, he insists that the divine concurrence does not impinge on human freedom because concurrence of divine providence and of human will is “not of collateral and equal causes, but of unequal and subordinate,”²¹⁵ To elaborate, while the former is “the first, universal, and hyperphysical cause,” the latter is “the second, particular and physical causes.” Thus, the concurrence of these two different causes is not “a coordination” between two equally ranked causes joined together to the

²¹¹ cf. Vermigli, *Loci Communes*, 153-54; Wendelin, *Christianae Theologiae*, 176-78; Van Mastricht, *Theoretico practica theologia*, II. 10. XXXII, 398.

²¹² “... voluntates bonas efficiendo malas, vel invitas et nolentes trahendo, vel moraliter ad malum qua malum incitando per praeceptum aut suasionem...” Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VII.XXIII (469).

²¹³ Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VII.XXIII (469).

²¹⁴ Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VI.I (458-59). Nevertheless, Turretin claims that it still can be described in some measure as far as is sufficient for salvation by the previous light of the divine word: “Quamvis vero conciliationis istius ratio in hac vita, clare et perfecte a nobis explicari nequeat; potest tamen praevia Verbi Divini luce, quantum ad salutem sufficit, utcunque describi.” Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VI.I (459).

²¹⁵ “Concursus Providentiae et voluntatis humanae, non est causarum collateralium et aequalium, se inaequalium et subordinarum.” Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VI.V (460).

production of one and the same effect.²¹⁶ Rather, Turretin maintains that the relation between them is properly explained as a subordination of the second cause to the first cause. Second, Turretin claims that God's concurrence with the second causes does not destroy the latter's own proper mode of operating. That is to say, even though God "previously moves and predetermines them by a motion not general but also special, still he moves them according to their own nature."²¹⁷ Thus, Turretin states as follows:

... thus actual providence (which is the execution of this decree) secures not only the infallible futurity of the thing decreed, but also its taking place in the very manner decreed (to wit, agreeably to the nature of each; i.e., necessary things take place necessarily, free and contingent things, however, freely and contingently).²¹⁸

Third, as already discussed above, Turretin asserts that the divine concurrence and human free choice can be compatible with each other because the former does not do any violence to the latter. Rather, God concurs with human will "rationally (by turning the will in a manner suitable to itself)."²¹⁹ Fourth, Turretin once again affirms that when God concurs with evil actions, God does not move the will as to be the author of them. As mentioned already, he claims that since God concurs not morally but only physically with the substance of evil deeds of human beings, human freedom in their actions are not thwarted at all.²²⁰

²¹⁶ Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VI.V (460).

²¹⁷ "Ita Deus concurrit cum causis secundis, ut licet eas praemoveat, et praedeterminet, motione non generali tantum, sed et speciali, eas tamen moveat secundum naturam ipsarum, nec adimat ipsis suum cujusque proprium operandi modum." Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VI.VI (460).

²¹⁸ "ita providentia actualis, quae est executio istius decreti, non tantum procurat, ut res decreta fiat infallibiliter, sed etiam ut fiat eo modo quo decreta est, nimirum consentaneae naturae cujusque, id. ut necessaria necessario, libera vero et contingentia libere et contingenter eveniant." Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VI.VI (460).

²¹⁹ "Unde tertio sequitur, cum providentia non concurrat cum voluntate humana, vel per coactionem, cogendo voluntatem invitam, vel determinando physice, ut rem brutam et caecam absque ullo judicio, sed rationaliter, flectendo voluntatem modo ipsi convenienti, ut seipsam determinet ut causa proxima actionum suarum, proprio rationis judicio, et spontanea voluntatis electione: eam libertati nostrae nullam vim inferre, sed illam potius amice fovere." Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VI.VII (460).

²²⁰ However, Turretin states that God concurs with the good actions as to be the author of them: "Nam in bonis quidem ita Deus voluntatem praemovet, ut eorum author sit, non tantum in genere naturae,

Concerning the relation between divine concurrence and human freedom, Brakel also insists, like Turretin, that God's sovereign providence does not eliminate contingency and human freedom because God's concurrence "enables man to be active in harmony with his nature, that is, by the free exercise of his will." Namely, since God neither removes the freedom of the will nor forces human beings to act contrary to their wills in His concurrence to all human actions, the free choice of mankind is preserved. Therefore, Brakel argues, it is not God but mankind who is the cause of sin.²²¹

2. The First Sin of Mankind in Paradise

Edwards' view of the cause of sin is specifically manifested in his discussion of Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden. Edwards first teaches that mankind was created with a possibility to do evil with free choice. If humanity is created in such a state, without inclination but with the possibility of sinning, why did he sin? Edwards clearly insists that Adam fell because of the misuse of his free choice.²²²

However, Edwards claims that Adam might have stood if he willed. However, since his will was pliable in either direction and he had not maintained constancy to persevere, Adam easily fell. Thus, for Edwards, the reason for why Adam falls into sin is not simply because he misuses his free will and choice. There is something withheld from man that allows for his infidelity and pride to cause the fall.

sed etiam secundum eorum bonitatem moralem, determinando voluntatem, non tantum quoad rem, id. bonum, vel in genere, vel in specie, sed etiam quoad modum..." Turretin, *Institutio* I, VI.VI.VIII (461). Edwards also elaborates on the relation between the first and second causes in the issue of the cause of sin. However, Edwards' discussion of the issue will be dealt with in detail in the following section of the chapter.

²²¹ Brakel, *Reasonable Service*, 341.

²²² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 248.

According to Edwards, God withheld the assistance of special grace from Adam and Eve. By doing so, God “left men to themselves, and to their own lusts and vile inclinations.”²²³ He states as follows:

It seem’d good to the all-wise creator to leave our first parents to themselves and their own strength, and the mutability of their wills, and not to vouchsafe them an extraordinary aid and power. He might have hindr’d the Fall, but he would not. Tho’ he knew they would miscarry without the assistance of special grace, yet he was not pleas’d to confer it upon them.²²⁴

He states that the reason of withholding God’s special grace was “because he had decreed their Fall.”²²⁵ Thus, though man possesses free will and choice, the will and decree of God, in some sense, also brings about the fall:

For this is an unquestionable maxim, that he could have prevented the being of sin, if he had thought good to do so; and therefore seeing he did it not, we may gather thence; that it was his will, and consequently his decree, that sin should be permitted. From what God actually doth or suffers to be done, we may gather what he had decreed to do.²²⁶

Herein, Edwards opposes those who argue that God’s permission of a thing and His willing of it are two different things; Adam sinned by divine permission, yet it does not follow that God willed or decreed Adam’s sin. In opposition to them, Edwards argues that “permission supposes a positive act, and that positive act is an act of the will.” He elaborates this as follows:

When God permits sin, he voluntarily suspends his operation, whereby he could have hinder’d the doing of it: and this suspending is not simply, not to will the being of sin, for if he would not have sin committed, he could, and he would have hinder’d the commission of it: But we see that he doth not hinder it, but suffers it to be, and therefore he may be said to will it; for in the suspending of his operation, there is contain’d an act of the divine will, where is a voluntary determining that he will not impede such actions.²²⁷

²²³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 102.

²²⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 101.

²²⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 101.

²²⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 102.

Thus, Edwards concludes that if God permitted Adam's sin as is agreed by all theologians, He also willed it and decreed it.²²⁸

Even though God decreed to permit Adam's fall, however, the blame for authoring sin does not fall on God. It should be noted again that according to Edwards, Adam freely fell. That is, God willed that Adam behaved and fell with his own free choice. Thus, for Edwards, the creation of human beings with free choice and his voluntary disobedience to God by free choice removes the charge that God is the author of sin.

3. Arguments against Reformed Adversaries' Objections

Edwards further elaborates on the relation between God's decree and human sin by criticizing and answering His adversaries' objections. First, he argues that the adversaries of the Reformed contradict themselves in their charge that the Reformed idea of a necessity of sinning makes God the author of sin. Edwards claims that no action can be regarded as sinful if it is not free. According to Edwards, however, Whitby argues that the Reformed teach that men are forced to do evil by the necessity of sinning. Then, Edwards insists, since an action is forced or coerced, that action cannot be considered as sin, and, if it is no sin, God, who is said to be the author, is not the author of sin. Thus, Edwards maintains that Whitby's argument is contradictory.²²⁹

²²⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 102.

²²⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 102.

²²⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 127. Edwards states that "and this is no uncommon thing with this sort of men, they usually make their way through contradictions, and assert that cause which they themselves have shatter'd and weaken'd." "I will further observe, that the persons who object these and the like things to us, are strangely partial, and don't give themselves leisure to see the consequence of their own propositions." Ibid. As another example, Edwards also points out the problem of Whitby's statement why a good God should condemn and even damn men "*for being willing to do* what His decree has made it necessary for them both to will and to do (Italics is mine)." His expression "being willing to do" clearly contradicts his argument that Reformed doctrine of divine decree forces men to sin against God.

Second, Edwards rebuts his opponents' argument that since God subtracted His grace from men, they necessarily cannot but sin:

They hold no such thing, but say, that sin is the consequent, but not the effect of that denial of grace. So in the present case, God decrees men shall sin, whence sin follows, but thence we cannot infer, that God is the author or efficient cause of sin. If we would be impartial, we should then find, that to will sin, or to decree the permission of it, is not to be the author of it, but are quite different things.²³⁰

Edwards' adversaries also claim that the Reformed doctrine of the decree teaches that God decided to refuse to give grace to some in order to damn them. However, Edwards argues that this is a gross misunderstanding because the Reformed teach that the divine predestination considers men as "sinful already, and such as have justly forfeited the divine grace."²³¹ He asserts that it is not possible for God to decree in the sense that Whitby means:

These are my thoughts concerning this matter, and I firmly adhere to this, that God could not shew his justice in the damnation of any, unless they were consider'd by him as deserving that damnation: For the all wise and holy being hates none of his creatures till they are the due objects of his hatred, which sin only can effect. God never makes use of his absolute sovereignty to condemn innocent creatures to eternal misery, or to inflict punishment without a cause. In this matter he acts not as an absolute Lord, but as a just judge: and hence it follows, that he doth not absolutely condemn anyone but on the account of his evil deeds.²³²

Edwards adds, he has never asserted that God decreed that any men should offend to give God an occasion to condemn human beings to eternal death.²³³

²³⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 128.

²³¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 127.

²³² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 175. Edwards also writes that "We hold that God creates no man to be damn'd, that he delights not in mens punishment till they deserve it. This is a maxim with us, that no man shall be damn'd by any decree of God, who doth not ruine himself by his own fault. It is mens willful unbelief and rejecting of the gospel that makes them obnoxious to the divine displeasure, and liable to eternal punishment. Man is the free cause of his own sin and damnation. He by his own voluntary choice prefers the ways of wickedness to those of godliness, and chooses the path of destruction, rather than that of happiness, and therefore it is fitting that his choice should prove his punishment. He makes himself incapable of heaven and eternal felicity, and what can be more reasonable than that he should be excluded from them?" Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 175.

²³³ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 180.

Third, Edwards' opponents claim that it makes God unjust to punish human beings eternally for sins which they are not able to avoid. However, Edwards refutes them through three reasons. First, he insists that the sinners deserve to be punished and cannot excuse themselves because they are not forced to sin but sin willingly by their own free choice.²³⁴ Regarding this, Edwards states as follows:

The necessity of offence doth not any ways excuse the person that gives offence; For this necessity proceeds from his own fault; he sins freely and voluntarily. And because he thus uses his natural freedom and choice, he is deservedly punish'd for his offence. He cannot make any reasonable plea and excuse for himself, because he is not forc'd and constrain'd to do what he doth. ... it [decree] is not compulsive, it doth not violently drag any man into sin and vice. The decree is an immanent act of God, and works no positive real effect on the person who is elected or reprobated. It hath no extrinsick physical influence or causality: only from it we may gather, that such things as are appointed and determin'd by it, shall certainly come to pass. The decree fixed the event and issue of the thing, but it causes no constraint in the acting of it; it puts a necessity on no man to be an unbeliever or impenitent: But men bring themselves into an impossibility of believing and repenting by their willful continuing in sin, by their customary and long repeated acts of vice, and thereby hardening their hearts. Wherefore this impossibility being introduc'd by their own fault, it is just in God to require faith and repentance of them, tho' they are not able to believe and repent, and it is just to punish them for the want of these.²³⁵

Second, Edwards asserts that the plea of inability or impossibility is of no effect because sinners do not even perform "some mere moral actions, and some outward and bodily exercises of religion," which do not exceed their own power and strength. He argues that several duties relating to religion are in their own power to do or avoid. Thus, they cannot but acknowledge the responsibility of their sin before God.²³⁶ Lastly, Edwards claims

²³⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 214.

²³⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 215. Edwards also states that "... for the decree only fixes the futurity of the action or event, but doth not force and compel any man: He that acts immorally, doth it voluntarily and freely, without any necessitating influence from the decree, and therefore it is his own will that makes him liable to punishment, and consequently renders that punishment just. For what is it that makes the punishment just? Is it not this, that the offender deserves it? And every sinner deserves punishment, because his sin was his own act. Whence it follows, that the righteous judge of all men may inflict punishment on them for their offences; and yet this is not inconsistent with his ordaining before the foundation of the world, that there should be sinful men in the world." Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 179-80.

²³⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 217.

that since God's justice and human beings' are not the same, one must not judge God's justice by a human standard. He thus states that "If we should suffer the commission of sin in others, when it is in our power to hinder it, it would be an unjust and vitious act in us: But 'tis not so with the divine being; for he is not oblig'd to hinder the acting of sin, as we are; he is above this law."²³⁷

IV. Criticism of Previous Scholarship on the Issue

Finally, the study of Edwards' understanding of divine providence helps us challenge previous misunderstandings on the orthodox doctrine of sin and free choice. As examined in chapter 1, it has been claimed that the Reformed emphasis upon the sovereign will of God leads to a deterministic understanding of providence. In particular, according to critics of Reformed theology, the Reformed doctrine of providence makes God the author of sin because if everything occurs under the control of the divine will, then apparently even human sin happens the way God determines it and it looks as if man cannot avoid it. If so, God is the author of sin and human beings are free from all their responsibility.

However, such deterministic or fatalistic evaluation of the sovereign providence of God does not conform to the case of Edwards. First of all, even though Edwards teaches God's infallible control of everything in the world, Edwards does not ignore the place of inferior causes, but carefully keeps a distinction between primary and secondary causes. On this distinction, an event or thing that is necessary with respect to God's providence as the first cause can be contingent with respect to men as the secondary causes. In this sense, human action as a secondary cause is still contingent despite divine providence. Thus, Edwards' distinction between the first and the second causes helps overcome the claim that Reformed doctrine of divine providence is deterministic.

²³⁷ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 180. See also *Veritas Redux*, 195-96.

The fact that human free choice and contingency are still maintained in the secondary cause is also significant to refute the accusation that the Reformed doctrine of providence makes God the author of sin. According to Edwards, God's providence does not work through evil human beings as though they were stones or tree trunks. Rather, they freely and voluntarily choose between different acts and sin in their freedom without any coercion. It was never Edwards' view that the moral acts of human beings are predetermined by God to the exclusion of their free choice of sin.

Moreover, Edwards' distinction between the necessity of compulsion and the necessity of event is once again helpful to understand the relation between divine providence and human freedom. As has been discussed in previous chapters, God's sovereign will does not destroy human freedom by causing any necessity of compulsion to human beings. Divine providence works through the necessity of certainty or infallibility. Edwards' teaching on the necessity of the event preserves contingency and freedom in human moral acts. In this regard, Edwards's view of providence is never causal determinism which makes human beings do things they otherwise do not want to do.

Moreover, among his several arguments against the adversaries of the Reformed, Edwards' doctrine of physical premotion or divine concurrence particularly helps overcome the charge that Reformed doctrine of divine providence makes God the author of sin. Edwards acknowledges that every time something occurs, God's causality is primary because He is the cause of His own being and human beings. However, Edwards distinguishes between physical acts as such and the depravity of the acts. On the basis of this distinction, he clearly argues that even though God concurs to every act of his creature, He does it as it is a physical act. That is to say, God concurs with the bare act of vice, not with the evil of it. Therefore, Edwards insists that evil acts can be properly ascribed to human beings' own acts and thereby they themselves are the authors of their evil deeds. Besides, he also distinguishes between the physical cause and moral cause:

God is not the moral cause but the physical cause of all evil acts. Consequently, through these distinctions between physical acts and the depravity of them, and moral cause and physical cause, Edwards shows that God does not morally cause human beings to sin.

In addition, according to Edwards, God cannot be blamed as the author of sin because there is the great difference of motivation between the work of God and the work of wicked men. Namely, even though God and men coincide to produce a certain action, their motive and ends behind the actions are greatly different: unlike human beings, God permits evil acts of the creatures for God's glory and benefits for human beings. In this regard, the act of evil human motive and the act of God's holy motive can be distinguished in one and the same acts of human beings.

In sum, in Edwards' thought, since human freedom and contingency are still preserved and humanity freely and voluntarily chooses sin without any coercion with regard to the immutable providence of God, the Reformed doctrine of providence does not result in metaphysical determinism or make God the author of sin. Consequently, previous criticism of Reformed theology that divine providence reduces men to mere passive pawns or makes God the author of sin cannot be validated at all, at least by Edwards' discussion of the subject.

V. Conclusion

Following his Reformed predecessors, Edwards teaches God's providential control over the universe at large, over the physical world, over the brute creation, and over the affairs of human beings. For Edwards, the connection between the existence of God, the attributes of God and his providence is evident. God's providential work is a necessary corollary of His existence and attributes. Edwards also teaches that providence is distinguished into either internal or external parts. He especially understands the actual providence of God to embrace a twofold work: (1) preserving and (2) governing of all things. Concerning the extent and scope of providence, Edwards argues that it reaches

His entire universe including all living creatures. Particularly, he insists upon God's providence over the things or events seemingly accidental or contingent.

Edwards' emphasis on the close relationship between the sovereign will of God and His creation ignited a strong debate with his opponents such as Whitby. For the adversaries of the Reformed, the Reformed doctrine of providence appears to imply that God's sovereign will destroys man's freedom or right to do his duty or sin. In particular, the issue of providence and humanity's sin becomes a central question to the debate between Edwards and Whitby, and the core of the debate between them consists in the following two issues: (1) whether God has willed human sin or not, and (2) if God has decreed it, God is the author of sin.

Concerning the first question, Edwards clearly argues that human sin was decreed by God from eternity. He defends his claim by carefully discussing the nature of divine will, the nature of divine permission, the reason of good and evil and the nature of divine providence in general including divine premotion. In addition to these theological and philosophical arguments, Edwards also relies on the exegetical arguments of the Scripture and the testimonies of authoritative figures in the history of Christianity.

As to the second issue, Edwards argues that God's decreeing of human sin does not make God the author of sin. The defense of his position is based on several theological and philosophical arguments: the right concept and nature of sin, withholding or withdrawing God's grace from men, putting occasions and objects before men, considering the evil spirit as the true cause of sin, making man sin in a way of punishment, the doctrine of divine concurrence, and permission of sin for the holy ends do not make God the author of human sin. Like his discussion of the first question, Edwards also uses the testimonies of church tradition to support his claim.

What then is the cause of sin? Instead of attributing the responsibility of sin to God, Edwards claims that man is the true cause of sin. In opposition to Whitby, Edwards argues that even though God has decreed sin, man is not compelled to sin. It is every

man's own free willing and acting that makes the sin, and makes him guilty and obnoxious to the divine justice. Thus, by ascribing the cause of sin to human free choice, Edwards does not exonerate men from their responsibility for their sin and rejects that God is the author of sin.

Lastly, the examination of Edwards' discussion of the relation between divine providence and human freedom defies the previous scholarship's myth that the Reformed teaching of divine providence makes human beings a senseless stone or tree trunk. Likewise, in his view, contrary to the modern scholarship's accusation, Reformed doctrine of providence and sin does not make God the author of sin at all.

Chapter 7: Edwards on Grace, Conversion, and Human Freedom

I. Edwards on Divine Grace, Conversion, and Human Freedom

1. The Definition of Grace

Edwards' doctrine of divine grace receives a lengthy and vigorous treatment in chapter 3 of *Veritas Redux*.¹ He begins his discussion of divine grace by refuting Jean LeClerc's charge that the meaning of the grace of God or God's work in conversion is obscure and unclear. Edwards argues that he willfully misunderstood the passages in the New Testament and the writings of the ancient Fathers before Augustine in order to ascribe the work of regeneration to the natural power of human beings.² Unlike LeClerc's argument, he insists that the concept of God's grace is "intelligible, plain, and easy" in the New Testament:

... for it signifies that gracious act of God whereby he effectually turns men from their sins, and begets faith and repentance in them, in order to their eternal happiness. Grace in this controversy now before us signifies (as the word itself properly denotes) the free gift and bounty of God extended to sinners, and exerting itself in the operations which are requisite to the renewing and sanctifying them.³

Having provided this definition, Edwards attempts to discuss the nature of divine grace in detail, especially through five specific propositions concerning it: (1) Conversion is not in human power, (2) the whole conversion of human beings is due to divine grace alone, (3) this grace is given only to the elect, (4) Even though we are converted by grace alone, however, there is "a personal and proper action" belonging to us, and (5) although conversion occurs by divine grace alone, we are "capable of promoting it by the use of

¹ Although not an attempt to describe and analyze his doctrine of salvation exhaustively, this chapter will reveal certain significant features of his soteriology, especially as it relates to the topic of divine sovereignty and human freedom.

² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 314. Edwards mentions his *Ars Critica* (1696), part 2, section I, chapter 8. However, he does not introduce Le Clerc's arguments in further detail.

³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 315. Concerning the definition of "grace" in Protestant scholastic theology, see Muller, *Dictionary*, 129.

proper means and endeavours.”⁴ Edwards elaborates each proposition in sequence to explain and clarify the nature of divine grace in human salvation.⁵

2. The Nature of Divine Grace in Conversion

(1) The First Proposition: Human Beings Are Dead in Sin

Edwards’ first proposition, conversion is not effected by human power, indicates the fact that after the fall, mankind is in a state of “impotency, depravity, and corruption, which is accompanied with an unwillingness and averseness to conform our selves to the will of heaven.” Thus, he insists that since Adam’s first sin, “man is not naturally disposed to believe and repent, or do any good that will be acceptable to God.”⁶ Consequently, following the classic Reformed position, he maintains that after the fall, human beings lost a power or an ability to believe or to do spiritual good that pleases God.⁷ That is, Edwards so completely embraces the idea of the will’s bondage to sin that he denies the existence of free choice altogether after the fall. He certainly indicates that the fallen human being can do nothing good in and of himself, and that he is dead in sin.⁸

⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 316.

⁵ Even though the portion of discussions is relatively small in comparison to that of *Veritas Redux*, Edwards’ doctrine of divine grace is also scattered around his other writings such as *Theologia Reformata* and *Arminian Doctrine Condemn’d*. However, since he explains the doctrine of divine grace the most substantially and systematically through his five propositions in chapter 3 of *Veritas Redux*, I will use his five propositions as a main structure to explain Edwards’ doctrine of divine grace and its relation to human freedom in this chapter.

⁶ Cf. Turretin, *Institutio*, XV. IV. XXXI; Brakel, *Reasonable Services* II, 216-19; Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants between God and Man: Comprehending A complete Body of Divinity* (Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 1990), 357-58; John Owen, *A Discourse Concerning The Holy Spirit* in *The Works of John Owen*, vol 3. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1862), 334; Stephen Charnock, *The Necessity, the Nature, the Efficient and the Instrument of Regeneration in the Complete Works of Stephen Charnock*, vol. 3. (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1865), 210; Boston, *The Body of Divinity*, 202; idem, *The Human Nature in Fourfold State*, 87-95.

⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 316.

⁸ Like other Arminians, however, Whitby denies this and argues: “The man thus disabled hath still a freedom in reference to these actions, because he hath, still the power of doing otherwise; that is, the faculty of willing otherwise is not taken from him, even as a man when he sits is free to walk, tho’ he

Edwards particularly compares this miserable condition of human beings to the dead who have to exert acts of life:

This comparing of persons, who are in their natural state, to dead men, doth convey unto us a very clear notion of the nature of this depraved and degenerate state. There is here, as in death, a cessation of motion and action; all operation, which might be of any use to the soul, is null'd, and there is an utter indisposedness to whatever is good and holy. And as death takes away all perception also, so this sinful state introduces insensibility and stupidity into the minds of men. We may truly say their eyes are closed up, and their ears are stop't, and all their functions and faculties are obstructed. There is no attention to right counsels, no conviction of conscience, no sense of the divine wrath. The fallen children of Adam are helpless in the midst of temptations, and nourish a profound security, though they are surrounded with perils. Fitly therefore is this lapsed state set forth by death. Every man before his conversion is a dead man; he is a mere carcase, and inanimate lump, and he hath no more ability to convert himself, than a dead man hath to raise himself to life.⁹

Edwards supports this argument through many biblical passages such as Romans 5:6 and 8:7. He also insists that this is proved by “our own breasts” and “our daily actions (our experiences).” For example, Edwards states that even though deists and those who extol free choice and the power of nature trust their own power and ability, “they are generally the most defective in observing the laws of that religion.”¹⁰

Edwards then explains in more detail why men cannot convert themselves by their own natural strength on several accounts. First, he asserts that the power of bare human reason and natural faculties does not effect conversion. Otherwise, most of the wise and learned men would have been converted into Christianity.¹¹ However, many of the most learned or the excellent moralists among the heathens or the Jews were actually the greatest adversaries to Christianity.¹² Second, he claims that if conversion is the result of

cannot walk while he sits, because he hath still the power or faculty of walking...” Whitby, *Six Discourses*, 305.

⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 316-17.

¹⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 318.

¹¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 318.

¹² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 318.

human beings' own power, Christ did not need to come and be crucified on the cross. Namely, since one can attain salvation by his/her own strength, Christ's work of redemption was useless and unnecessary.¹³ Third, Edwards claims that the idea of salvation by human beings' natural power is derogatory to God's glory. He states that God's bestowing of His saving grace to men entirely depends on God's own sovereign will:

God is not allow'd to have an absolute power and sovereign dominion over man's will, but the man himself hath; yea, and he hath uncontrollable power not only over his own will, but over God's grace, for he can make it effectual or ineffectual when he pleases. His own free will is the principle of all grace and goodness in him. God only furnishes him with the means, but 'tis the man himself that must render these means successful.¹⁴

Fourth, Edwards argues that if conversion is from ourselves, we "would have just matter of boasting." According to him, the Bible teaches the opposite truth that human beings should be utterly humble because conversion is not their own works at all.¹⁵ Fifth, he maintains that if grace is made effectual by their own power, human beings can frustrate God's saving work, because grace can be made ineffectual by the same human power.¹⁶ Edwards firmly insists on the absolute power of God's saving grace:

... our conversion and effectual calling are such, and cannot possibly be disappointed, when God hath purposed and design'd them. This cannot be otherwise, because the efficacy of God's grace depends not on our concurrence and compliance with it, but rather it makes us concur and comply, and irresistibly works upon us.¹⁷

¹³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 319.

¹⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 320.

¹⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 320.

¹⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 321.

¹⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 321-22.

Moreover, Edwards reaffirms that, after the fall, mankind does not have free choice any more for spiritual matters.¹⁸ He, therefore, argues that fallen will cannot perform any spiritual good.¹⁹ Edwards remarks as follows:

tho' the light of reason and moral principles be not extinguish'd by the fall of man, yet it is not by virtue of these that any man can believe and repent, and amend his life. For in this lapsed and corrupt state we are become weak and feeble, important and crazy, so that it is impossible for us to change our selves. Our very wills are not in our own power, and we have no ability and strength of our selves to perform what the divine law requires of us.²⁰

Indeed, Edwards maintains that in spiritual matter, sinners do not have free choice in the sense that they cannot freely choose the spiritual good with which God is pleased.

However, as already noted in chapter 3, it does not deny that men still remain endowed with the natural freedom from compulsion or force. In other words, even after the fall, the faculty of will (*voluntas*) itself is not destroyed, but only the ability to use it rightly concerning spiritual matters. Thus, for Edwards, even though men lost free choice in the spiritual realm, they maintain the freedom of contrary choice in earthly matters and can do earthly good.²¹ He states as follows:

The self-determining power of the will, we have learnt from the Sacred Scriptures, that tho' a man is endowed with a self-determining power as to common and secular

¹⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 323.

¹⁹ In his discussion of good, Edwards distinguishes the difference only between earthly good and spiritual good. However, other Reformed scholastics provide more delicate distinctions on it. For example, Brakel distinguishes four types of good works: natural, civil, externally religious, and spiritual good works. He argues that the unconverted can perform the first three types of good works, but not the fourth. He writes that their good works are good “in materialiter, that is, in a substantial sense, but not as far as essence is concerned. They are not formaliter (that is, not truly) good works. Spiritual light, life, and virtue are not distinguished from the natural in degree, but rather in essence.” Thus, for Brakel, the virtue of the unconverted does not have the nature of true virtue. Brakel, *Reasonable Services* I, 221. Gomarus presents three different kinds of good: natural, moral, and spiritual goods, which pertain to “animal life,” “external obedience and conservation of the human race,” and “spiritual life and beatitude,” respectively. Gomarus, *Disputationum Theologicarum Decima-Quarta, de Libero Arbitrio*, Samuel Gruterus respondens, 19 March 1603 (Leiden: Ioannes Patius, 1603), xi. Quoted from Keith Stanglin, “To Comfort the Afflicted and Upset the Secure: Jacobus Arminius and the Roots of the Leiden Debate over the Assurance of Salvation” (Ph. Dissertation., Grand Rapids: Calvin Theological Seminary, 2006), 88-89.

²⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 323.

²¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 323.

things, yet he hath had none in spiritual ones since his fall. It is not denied, that a creature may be created with such a power even in spiritual things; and our first parents, and we our selves in them, had this granted to us, but we have lost it. And therefore now the determining of the will in the things of God is his sole act, without any concurrence of man.²²

In short, in Edwards' understanding, men cannot convert themselves by their natural strength because after the fall they lost their ability to choose and perform good that is acceptable to God. In that sense, men are in the state of the bondage of sin. However, since essential function of the will is not destroyed by the fall, men still have a natural freedom to choose in earthly matters.

(2) The Second Proposition: The Whole Conversion of Humanity Is Due to God's Grace

Edwards' second proposition naturally flows from the discussion of the previous one: If a human being is dead in sin, how could he or she participate in or respond to this redemption found in Christ? Edwards clearly asserts that the entire conversion of human beings and their ability to do spiritual good is owing to divine grace.²³ In this proposition, the total dependence of humans on divine grace is meticulously affirmed.

Edwards claims that only the infusion of "divine principle and spirit" into men makes it possible for "their wills, affections and manners" to be changed.²⁴ More specifically, when God's grace is infused into the elect, "the divine law is put into the inward parts of the faithful, and written on their heart so that their understandings, wills, affections and consciences are effectually wrought upon."²⁵ In a word, God gives "new heart and new spirit" to the chosen without which none can follow God's way and obey His laws.²⁶ Edwards supports his argument with numerous biblical passages.

²² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 323.

²³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 323.

²⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 324.

²⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 324.

²⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 324.

In the explanation of the change of human beings by grace in conversion, Edwards particularly emphasizes the importance of the change of the will in conversion. He states that the will is “the source and fountain of all humane actions.”²⁷ Thus, regeneration is “chiefly seated in the will, because the willing of good (and not the bare knowing of it) denominates a good man, and God accepts this, when many other things are wanting and defective.”²⁸ He elaborates the change of the will as follows:

Another work of the Spirit is to influence upon the will and affections, and to give them a new turn. Having made his way by clearing the intellectual faculty... he easily prevails with these to embrace the truth and good which are known to be such. The will, that refractory and stubborn faculty, which is the spring of all the disorders of our lives, is by this divine power brought into subjection, and made to comply with the will of heaven. Nor are the affections less powerfully wrought upon by the same divine efficacy.²⁹

²⁷ As already discussed in chapter 3, Edwards is a voluntarist who puts the will in the driver’s seat. Especially, Edwards is a soteriological voluntarist because for him faith is a matter of intellect and will in conjunction with the highest part of faith belonging to the will. Following Augustinian tradition, Edwards strongly argues that there can be no true saving faith apart from the involvement of the will. Thus, for Edwards, the will which is incoercible needs to be transformed. John Edwards, *The Doctrine of Faith and Justification Set in a True Light* (London, 1708), 76- 90.

²⁸ John Edwards, “A Discourse of Regeneration,” in *Theologia Reformata: or Discourse on Those Graces and Duties which are Purely Evangelical, and not contained in the Moral Law: and on the Helps, Motives, and Advantages of performing them. Being an entire treatise in four parts: and if added to the two former volumes, makes a compleat body of divinity*. Vol. III. (London: 1726), 31. For the Reformed Scholastics, conversion is distinguished into *conversio passiva* which pertains to the will’s reception of divine grace without any motion of its own and *conversio activa* which pertains to the regenerated will’s actual turn to God, and the former is commonly regarded as regeneration. Muller, *Dictionary*, 82-83. Even though Edwards does not clearly write concerning the difference between regeneration and conversion, it is certain from his discussions that Edwards largely follows this traditional distinction. For example, Edwards states that “And then as to the difference between repentance and regeneration, I conceive this is it; the change that is wrought in a man is consider’d two ways, either as it comes from God, and hath the Holy Spirit for its author, or as it refers to man himself, and his endeavours, but yet not so as to exclude God’s help and assistance. As to the former consideration, that change is call’d regeneration, or the new birth, and is the more signal and immediate work of God: But as you consider that change in the latter sense, it is call’d repentance, and it signifies our proper acts and endeavours. Or, if you will, thus, repentance is a compleat regeneration or conversion” Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* III, 1-2. Concerning his distinction between Sanctification, Regeneration, and Repentance, see Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* III, 1.

²⁹ Edwards, *Theologia Reformata* I, 499. Cf. Thus, Ames writes that “The will is the proper and prime subject of this grace; the conversion of the will is the effectual principle in the conversion of the whole man.” William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, ed. John D. Eusden (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), 159.

Indeed, Edwards “places regeneration in a thorough change of the will.”³⁰ He, however, never teaches that conversion involves the destruction of the substance or faculty of the will and its replacement by another: the destruction or removal of the substance of the heart or will. What is changed in conversion is not the faculty or substance of willing, nor is it merely the actions of the will but the quality or habit of the will.³¹ In short, the will remains as created, and the change takes place in its habit, not its substance.³²

Thus, Edwards uses the idea of infused habit (*habitus infusus*) to explain the sudden change in men’s souls in the work of conversion.³³ Certainly, since Edwards

³⁰ Edwards: *Theologia Reformata* III, 31. However, Edwards’ main opponent, Whitby, insists that regeneration mainly occurs in the human intellect. According to him, the role of the Holy Spirit in regeneration is to assist the humanity by the illumination on the human intellect. Denying the total corruption of the human soul, therefore, Whitby states that “It therefore can be only requisite, in order to these ends, that the Good Spirit should so illuminate our understanding, that we attending to, and considering what lies before us, should apprehend, and be convinced of our duty; and that the blessings of the Gospel should be so propounded to us, as that we may discern them to be our chiefest good, and the miseries it threatneth, so as we may be convinced they are the worst of evils, that we may chuse the one, and refuse the other.” Whitby, *Six Discourses*, 213. See also, *Ibid.*, 221.

³¹ *Habitus*, which can be translated into “disposition,” indicates “spiritual capacity, belonging to either of the faculties of the soul, i.e., to mind or to will.” Muller, *Dictionary*, 134.

³² Calvin also states that “the will remains in man just as it was originally implanted in him, and so the change takes place in the habit, not in the substance.” John Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will: A Defence of the Orthodox Doctrine of Human Choice against Pighius*, edited by A. N. S. Lane, translated by G. I. Davies (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 210. Boston also clearly claims that the substance of the will is not changed: “A change of qualities or dispositions: it is not a change of the substance, but of the qualities of the soul. Vicious qualities are removed, and the contrary dispositions are brought in, in their room. “The old man is put off,” Eph. 4:22; “the new man is put on,” ver. 24. Man lost none of the rational faculties of his soul by sin. He had an understanding still, but it was darkened; he had still a will, but it was contrary to the will of God. So in regeneration, there is not a new substance created, but new qualities are infused; light instead of darkness, righteousness instead of unrighteousness.” Boston, *The Human Nature*, 98. Vermigli also asserts that when man is regenerated through the efficient work of the Holy Spirit, “transmutation” of matter takes place. More specifically, Vermigli teaches that “through transmutation matter first takes on new form and is moved by an efficient cause.” This process confers “a new subject” and thus a “new motion” for the matter. Vermigli, “Free Will,” 306. See also, Kalvin S. Budiman, “Peter Martyr Vermigli: a reformer perfecting Aristotle’s virtue theory,” (Th.M. thesis., Calvin Theological Seminary, 2005), 84. As with Edwards, Turretin insists that God bestows new habits or dispositions upon the faculties of corrupted man: “Thus this habitual conversion consists in principles of action which God confers upon the faculties of corrupt man. They are supernatural qualities or habits and dispositions, from which results an active power of converting himself (such as the Scriptures mean by the “new heart,” the “seed of God,” “eyes,” “ears,” “mind” and the like denoting something inherent and permanent).” Turretin, *Institutio*, XV.IV.XIII. He also states that “Habitual or passive conversion takes place by the infusion of supernatural habits by the Holy Spirit.” Turretin, *Institutio*, XV.V.IV.

affirms the Reformed doctrine of “a forensic justification on the ground of the alien righteousness (*iustitia aliena*) of Christ imputed to believers by grace alone through faith,” he does not agree with Roman Catholics’ doctrine of *habitus gratiae* which implies an intrinsic righteousness in the believer.³⁴ Against those who oppose this concept,³⁵ therefore, Edwards states as follows:

I know the doctrine of infused habits hath been exposed as a ridiculous notion, but in my judgment it is very accountable; for tho’ habits are generally taken for such strong inclination to virtue or vice, as are gain’d by frequent acts, and consequently are not acquired in an instant; yet if by habit we understand a confirmed and established frame of mind, abstract from any repeated acts and length of time, it is very consistent with good sense to say that such a frame or temper of soul is infused, that is, it is produced by God in a very short time, and on a suddain. Thus, there is an infusion of grace.³⁶

Accordingly, Edwards argues that “Christian faith, and all other graces, are immediately infused by God, without any co-operation of man.” In other words, God “so efficaciously works upon some, (that is, his elect) and infuses grace into them so irresistibly that they can’t but receive it.”³⁷ He states that the doctrine of omnipotent power of God and the examples of the instantaneous conversion of Jews and gentiles in the New Testament support this.³⁸ Consequently, for Edwards, whereas sin is from men, “every good thought,

³³ For Protestant scholastic theology, the infusion of habits indicates “a disposition of mind or will not present naturally in a human being, usually because of the loss of the *imago Dei* in the fall, that is graciously instilled or infused in mind or will by God.” Muller, *Dictionary*, 134-35.

³⁴ Muller, *Dictionary*, 134. For the Protestant scholastics, *gratia infusa* is “not the basis of justification” but the outcome of regeneration and “the basis of sanctification” as “the source” of all the good works of the regenerate. *Ibid.*, 131. Edwards, *Faith and Justification*, 309-15. For example, Edwards says that “To conclude, if we would have the substance of justification comprised in a definition, it may be represented thus; It is God’s gracious act whereby he absolves sinners from guilt, and esteems them as truly righteous, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and applied by faith.” *Ibid.*, 315.

³⁵ For example, concerning this concept, without a detailed explanation, Whitby simply states “That any supernatural habits must be infused into us in an instant, and not produced by frequent actions, or that any other supernatural aid is requisite to the conversion of a sinner, besides the forementioned illumination of the Holy Spirit, and the impression which he makes upon our hearts by the ideas which he raises in us, is that which my hypothesis by no means will allow...” Whitby, *Six Discourses*, 225.

³⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 356.

³⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 357.

desire, endeavour, and work, is from above, and it is a gift, and is the result of that divine grace, and the aids of the Holy Spirit which are bestowed upon us.”³⁹

On these considerations of the absolute role of grace in conversion and good works, Edwards refutes the Remonstrants’ doctrine of grace. First of all, he criticizes that they make no distinction between nature and grace.⁴⁰ According to Edwards, the grace of God in Arminian theology is no more than giving men faculties and upholding them through the effect of common providence. Thus, even though they acknowledge divine grace and its role in good works, they regard it as mere natural and common assistance of God, such as eating, drinking, walking, speaking, reading, writing, and the like.⁴¹ Simply speaking, for them, God’s grace is not supernatural. However, Edwards rejects this view as follows:

The one require the ordinary concurrence of heaven, the other are the product of an extraordinary assistance. We cannot do acts of holiness as we do other works, namely, by the common influence of the almighty, but a singular grace, a power more than ordinary is requisite.⁴²

Thus, Edwards maintains that supernatural help is necessary for faith and good works. He asserts that no human beings can be saved without this supernatural grace. God only can give it and if he does not give it, they cannot have it.⁴³

Second, Edwards opposes the Arminians’ argument that even though God provides His grace to all men and it helps men’s will make a right choice, it ultimately

³⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 356.

³⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 327.

⁴⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 330.

⁴¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 329. Edwards also claims that “they confound grace and nature, for nature is common to all men, so is the grace which they speak of, which they call sufficient grace; and they say it is given to every man.” Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 25.

⁴² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 330.

⁴³ Therefore it is certain that Edwards disallows the erroneous Pelagian view that the grace of eternal life is acquired by meritorious actions.

depends on the choice of men's will whether God's grace is made effectual or ineffectual.⁴⁴ Edwards claims that Whitby follows this synergistic view of the role of grace and human free choice in conversion. In fact, Whitby claims that since the very nature of human will is indifferent to good or evil, the grace of God and all its operations depend upon the will of human beings, whereby he/she can believe and repent, if he pleases. Thus, he argues that unless human natural free will renders divine grace effectual, God cannot convert the human race.⁴⁵ Accordingly, since Whitby attributes conversion to the efficacy of the will, Edwards labels him as a Pelagian:

But how is this divine and supernatural grace, when the efficacy of it depends upon our own compliance? And how is this grace special, when 'tis common to all men, when it is in every man's power, and when every man is able to exert it? And how is it special, when 'tis only a general aid and assistance? Briefly... our Remonstrants and Arminians, and our Dr. amongst the rest, deny the necessity of divine grace, truly and properly so call'd, in order to the prosecution of good works: They attribute conversion and regeneration to their own wills, not to divine grace (which is purely Pelagianism.)⁴⁶

Edwards also insists that Roman Catholics hold the same view with the Arminians at this point. Even though they teach the absolute necessity of divine grace for doing spiritual good, they mean by it "no more than such ordinary assistance and concurrence" which God bestows on all living beings, and they teach that it depends on their own natural free choice rendering it effectual or not. He cites Bellarmine's *Grace and Free Will* as an example.⁴⁷

In Edwards' understanding, however, grace is not an aid for the weak. But rather it is the promise of new life for the dead. Edwards was actually a champion of the Augustinian and broadly catholic understanding of grace against a Pelagian or semi-

⁴⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 330-31.

⁴⁵ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrine Condemn'd*, 26. This is the main argument of the whole chapter 3 in Whitby's *Six Discourses*.

⁴⁶ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 27.

⁴⁷ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 27.

Pelagian deviation from it. Edwards, therefore, refutes his opponents' synergistic idea of grace and defends the Reformed monogistic view of divine grace in men's conversion and good work through the theological distinction, and the testimonies of Scripture and the Church Fathers. First of all, he employs the distinction between preventing grace and concomitant grace. Edwards defines preventing grace as "which is when God prepares mens hearts for their gracious change which he designs to work in them. This is called God's touching mens hearts...." Presenting many Scriptures to prove this, such as 1 Samuel 10:26, Acts 16:14, and Matthew 11:27, Edwards elaborates the concept of a preventing grace as follows:

It is necessary that God should work on mens hearts by the regenerating spirit, in order to the first entrance into a state of grace. He must lay hold upon them, and stop and arrest them in their course of sinning, and turn their hearts towards him. This is the first step towards heaven, this is the first beginning of conversion and sanctification. These cannot be wrought without this antecedent and preventing grace. This want of this is the reason why men remain infidels and impenitent.⁴⁸

Actually, the concept of preventing grace is employed by Edwards' adversaries in different terms such as exciting, prevenient, and cooperating. However, their idea of preventing grace is different from that of Edwards because they mean by this:

only sufficient grace acting by illumination and moral suasion (which does not subject the free will to itself so as to efficaciously incline and determine it to acting, but is subjected to the free will so that it is always in its power to receive or reject that grace; to consent to or dissent from it), and by cooperating grace, that which cooperates with the yet unconverted will, and with which in turn the will not as yet converted cooperates."⁴⁹

For example, Whitby maintains that the preventing grace is the beginning of the work of grace which comes before conversion and on which conversion depends. Thus, this prevenient grace provides everything the sinner needs in order to be regenerated.⁵⁰ In this

⁴⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 332.

⁴⁹ Turretin, *Institutio*, XV. V. VII.

⁵⁰ Whitby, *Six Discourses*, 228-29.

sense, for Whitby, the sinner is unable to do the good or to be saved without it. However, this grace is necessary for salvation but does not insure that salvation will ensue. That is, even though this grace renders human beings able to respond positively to the gospel, this enabling grace does not make them actually respond.⁵¹ Consequently, this sufficient grace becomes efficient only if human beings positively respond to it.⁵² On the contrary, Edwards' idea of preventing grace clearly suggests that grace is efficacious; we cannot choose whether to accept or spurn initial grace.⁵³

On the other hand, Edwards defines concomitant and assisting grace as "the divine grace for the perfecting and compleating of a Christian."⁵⁴ He elaborates this as follows:

⁵¹ Cf. Concerning the prevenient grace, Arminius states that "De gratia & libero arbitrio sic doceo secundum scripturas & consensum orthodoxum. Hoc sine illa nullum verum & spirituale bonum incipere aut perficere posse. Gratiam, & quidem quae Christi est & ad Regenerationem peninet (ne cum Pelagio ludere dicer in voce gratiae) dico necessariam esse simpliciter & absolute, ad mentis illuminationem, affectuum ordinationem, & voluntatis ad bonum inclinationem illa est, quae operator in mentem, in affectum, in voluntatem: quae menu infundit bonas cogitationes, affectui inspirat bona desideria, voluntatem flectit, ad exequendum bonas cogitationes & desideria bona. Haec praevenit, comitatur, subsequitur. Haec excitat, adiuvat, operator ut velimus, & cooperator ne frustra velimus. Haec tentationes avertit, in tentationibus adsistit & opitulatur, contra carnem, mundum, & Sathanam sustinet, in lucta Victoria potiri concedit: victos & lapsos resuscitat, stabilit & novis viribus instruit, cautioresque reddit. Haec salutem inchoat, haec promovet, haec perficit & consummate. Arminius, "Ad Hippolytus A Collibus," *Opera*, 772. However, concerning the synergistic nature of Arminius' prevenient grace, Headly rightly states that "The prevenient grace gives man the ability, "efficaciously," to say yes or no to the gospel. All men, without distinction, have this grace given to them so that they have it in their power to respond positively (or negatively) to the external and internal call of grace. Should men respond positively to the internal and external overtures of God, that is their doing." Headly, "The Nature of the Will," 52.

⁵² Whitby, *Six Discourses*, 223-25. Consequently, while agreeing with Edwards that the human being's will was hindered by sin and that all good that a human being could do was owed to grace, Whitby nonetheless insists that even a fallen human being could take the initial step toward salvation. Namely, even though he acknowledge the necessity of a certain prevenient and exciting grace and he does not argue that man is able to convert himself without grace, he strongly argues that man is able to cooperate with that exciting grace. Ibid. However, Edwards clearly affirms that even the initial movement toward faith was itself the gift of the Holy Spirit. Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 352.

⁵³ In this regard, even though Edwards' adversaries frequently distinguish grace into "exciting and assisting, operating and cooperating, prevenient and subsequent," their distinction of the terms is far different from that of the Reformed. Consequently, in spite of some similarities, their usage of the terms should be placed within an alternative theological system to that of the Reformed.

⁵⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 333.

Secondly, concomitant and assisting grace is as necessary as this. That is, we must not only be prevented and excited by a divine power, but we must be carried on, and actually enabled by the same power. As the first grace is requisite to bring men into a state of grace, so the second is as needful to confirm and strengthen them in it. It is not enough that our wills be disposed, but they must likewise be set on work, and our actions must be agreeable to them; and both must be by a continual influx and operation from above. God's grace first softens and melts the heart, like wax, and then makes what impression it pleases on it. Not only the beginning, but the whole progress and persisting in the way of holiness, is from God.⁵⁵

Simply speaking, once we have been brought by God's grace to obey righteousness we then are inclined to follow the further action of grace. Therefore, Edwards argues as follows:

for every good work we must have new helps and fresh aids of the spirit. All our acts of holiness are from God, not only as he gives us souls, which are capable of willing, but as he continually actuates them, and by an immediate concourse inclines directs and determines them.⁵⁶

Indeed, in Edwards' understanding, the ability to stretch out the hand and receive the gift offered is also a direct result of God's grace—a grace which ensures the response. Thus, Edwards' doctrine of assisting grace does not imply human merit; when we obey God, we do not by some independent power of our own cooperate with him. It is throughout the grace of God, not just at the beginning, that God works in us to will and to do according to his good pleasure. For Edwards, we act only to the extent that we are acted upon. Thus, providing many texts of Scripture, such as Isaiah 26:12, John 6:26, and 1 Corinthians 15:10, which attest the necessity of this concomitant and assisting grace, he finally asserts that “Thus all that we can do in religion depends upon God, and is from him, and is wholly owing to his gracious influence and operation. He doth not only put us into the way, but he leads us in it, and conducts us to the end.”⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 332-33.

⁵⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 333.

⁵⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 333-34. Consequently, for Edwards, cooperation with grace does not imply that the gift of perseverance is given according to how we cooperate with earlier grace, which would make us masters of our own destiny rather than God alone. The effective operation of grace is not confined to the beginning of the Christian life but perseverance to the end. More specifically, Edwards maintains that the ground of perseverance is not in human cooperation but in (1) God's decree, (2) God's immutability,

Edwards' distinction between prevenient grace and concomitant grace is also often found in other Reformed theologians.⁵⁸ For example, following Augustinian sense, Calvin claims that "God by co-operating perfects that which by operating he has begun. It is the same grace but with its name changed to fit the different mode of its effect."⁵⁹

Similarly, Vermigli distinguishes between "prevenient grace" and "subsequent grace." According to him, the former refers to the grace whereby "our will is healed and it begins to will well." On the other hand, the latter signifies the grace which works together with men to help them continue to will well.⁶⁰ Vermigli insists that these graces are not two graces but one grace which can be distinguished only by "the effects."⁶¹ However, like other Reformed theologians, Vermigli strongly criticizes the synergistic idea that men can cooperate with prevenient grace by their own choice even at the beginning of conversion process.⁶²

(3) God's faithfulness, (4) God's power, (5) union with Christ as head and members, and husband and wife, (6) the seal of the Holy Spirit, and (7) the restoration of free choice to continue to do spiritual good. Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 451-466.

⁵⁸ Augustine already distinguished between operating and cooperating grace: "For in sacred scripture we read both his mercy shall go before me (Ps 59:10) and his mercy shall follow me (Ps 23:6); it goes before the unwilling, that they may will, and it follows the willing, that they may not will in vain." Augustine, *Enchiridion* 9 [32]. And in the same place, he tells us that it was rightly said by the apostle: "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that show mercy, so that the whole is due to God, who both prepares a good will of man to be assisted and assists it when prepared" (ibid.). "That we may, therefore, will, he operates without us; when, however, we will, and so will as to do, he cooperates with us; still without him either operating that we may will or cooperating when we will, we have no ability to do the good works of piety" Augustine, *On Grace and Free Will*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff, First Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), 5:458.

⁵⁹ Calvin, *Institutes*. II.III.XI.

⁶⁰ "Adhaec faciunt aliam gratiam praevenientem, aliam subsequenter. Quam divisionem Augustinus videtur probare... Primum enim sanatur voluntas, ea samara incipit bene velle: post quae bene voluerit, incipit exequi deinde in bene agendo perseverat: postremo coronatur. Praevenit ergo gratia voluntatem nostrum sanando: eadem sequitur efficiendo, ut quae recta sunt, placeant. Praevenit, ut velimus: subsequitur impellendo, ut quae volumus perficiamus..." Vermigli, *Loci Communes* (London: Thomas Vautrollerius, 1583). III. II. XIV, 481-82. Vermigli also uses the distinction between "operating grace" and "cooperating grace." He states that "Itaque gratia operans est, quae ab initio voluntatem sanat, & immutat: deinde efficit, ut ea immutata, & sanata recte agat. Et primum quidem dicitur operans gratia: deinde cooperans." Ibid., III. II. XIII, 49.

⁶¹ "Verum haec distinctione recipienda est, ut de una, eademque gratia intelligatur: varietas autem consistat in effectis." Vermigli, *Loci Communes*, III. II. XIV, 482.

Rejecting the Arminian sense of the terms, Turretin distinguishes the difference between “exciting, operating and prevenient grace” and “assisting, cooperating, and subsequent.” He argues that the former indicates “the first movement of efficacious grace by which we are excited from the death of sin to a new life and really converted before any cooperation and concurrence of our will.” In contrast, Turretin claims that the latter refers to “its second movement, which is cooperate with by the converted and assists them to act.”⁶³

In short, for Edwards and his Reformed associates, prevenient or operating grace is the efficacious grace of conversion by which the Holy Spirit regenerates the human will. It is, therefore, the grace through which we are justified. However, cooperating or assisting grace is the continuing grace of the Holy Spirit. By cooperating with and reinforcing the regenerate will, it becomes the ground of all good works in sanctification.

Second, Edwards appeals to several biblical passages such as 1 Corinthians 1:4, Ephesians 4:7, and Hebrews 12:28 to refute Whitby and other adversaries’ synergistic view of grace in conversion. According to him, these several passages in the Bible clearly testify that humanity’s own power cannot resist, defeat, or frustrate the work of divine grace, and show that the reason why one person believes and repents, and not another is not because of the use of their own free choice but because of “the predominance of grace.”⁶⁴ Thus, Edwards argues that his adversaries’ synergistic concept of grace is not “the grace of Gospel.”⁶⁵

⁶² “Quare non recte sentiunt, quio gratiam praevenientem putant esse communem quendam motum, quo Deus pulset hominum corda, ea ad bene agendum inuitando: quasi positum sit in illorum manu, ut vel accedant, vel rejiciant inuitantem.” Vermigli, *Loci Communes*, III. II. XIV, 50.

⁶³ Turretin, *Institutio*, XV. V. VII.

⁶⁴ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 28.

⁶⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 331. Edwards describes the grace of Gospel as “There would never be any conversion wrought, if there were no grace but this. The true and genuine grace which we are treating of, is of a higher nature. To speak all in a word, it is that saving work of God’s spirit on the hearts of men, whereby the perverse wills of sinners are master’d and conquer’d, and the whole man effectually chang’d and renew’d; and thereby the power of God, and not of man, is exalted.” Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 331.

Third, Edwards relies on the writings of the Church Fathers. In fact, the use of the Church Fathers becomes a significant issue later in his *Arminian Doctrine Condemn'd* because Whitby appeals to their testimonies to oppose Edwards' monogistic view of divine grace. Edwards particularly presents two arguments against Whitby's use of the first Christian writers. First of all, Edwards argues that Whitby and his associates' view of divine grace is quite different from that of the church writers in the first times.⁶⁶ He insists that their idea of divine grace is rather identical with that of the Pelagians. For example, Edwards insists that even though Whitby insists that he himself and other Arminians do not deny the necessity of divine grace in the work of conversion,⁶⁷ "this is but a flourish and a cheat and hath no reality in it."⁶⁸ Edwards compares their view of the necessity of divine grace to that of Pelagius:

They talk of the grace of God, and profess to own that it is necessary to the doing of any good action: But as Pelagius did, so do they; they mean by it no more than the natural and rational illumination of the mind, and the freedom of will which man hath received from God, together with outward instruction and information out of God's word.⁶⁹

Hence, Edwards insists that since they magnify the strength of human free choice and deny the efficacy of God's grace, Whitby and all of Remonstrants and Arminians belongs to the same category with the Pelagians.⁷⁰ Edwards specifically argues, the early

⁶⁶ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 24.

⁶⁷ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 24-25.

⁶⁸ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 25.

⁶⁹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 25. Edwards also writes that "But these men reply, that they do not derogate from the power of God; but the reason why the redemption wrought by Christ for all the world is not effectual, is because men willfully reject the mercy offer'd to them: for we must know, they say, that every man is left to his free will, because a man is no man if he hath not free will, that is, a power to chuse either good or evil: and therefore God doth not interpose with his power, lest he should destroy the essential property of the soul, which is free will; and thence it is that man falls short of the benefit of that salvation which God really and sincerely intended him." Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 86.

⁷⁰ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 25. Edwards argues that "the liberty of indifferency, which the Dr. stands up for, is the very same doctrine that the Pelagian hereticks maintain'd."⁷⁰ Edwards relies on Jansenius who asserted that "it was the Pelagian error, that indifferency to good and evil is required to freedom of will." Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 32-33.

Christian writers such as Vossius, Augustine, Jerome, and Prosper particularly show that Whitby's concept of grace or the divine help is identical with that of the Pelagians.⁷¹

Second, Edwards refutes Whitby's use of Cyprian, Basil, and Jerome. Even though Whitby quotes them to support his view, he states, Whitby's reliance on those Fathers does not help his purpose at all due to several problems. First, Whitby cites Cyprian's statement that human beings possess "credendi vel non credendi libertatem in arbitrio positam." Edwards, however, insists that the context of this passage concerns the liberty of the will to spiritual good which is in the regenerate and, thus, this assertion is confuted by Cyprian himself in other places. For example, in his first epistle to Donatus, *Concerning the Grace of God*, Cyprian claims that conversion is "wholly due to the light infused from above, the spirit derived from heaven. It was not to be ascribed to the power of man, but to the gift of God.... all that we can do is to be attributed to God."⁷²

Second, Edwards deals with Whitby's citation of Basil's *Commentary on Isaiah*. He insists that Whitby's quotation does not support him because he is not only wrong with the grammar of the words but also ignores its scope in the text. Moreover, Edwards states that even if one finds statements that favor Whitby's argument, one should acknowledge that the Church Fathers including Basil are often uncertain in their doctrinal position and thus contradict themselves by the inconsistency of their judgments in their works. Thus, Edwards asserts that Whitby's quotations of Basil's statements on the power of free choice in the postlapsarian state do not necessarily prove the case at all.⁷³

Third, Edwards criticizes Whitby's misinterpretation of Jerome's text. For example, in order to support his claim, Whitby renders, "Liberum servat arbitrium, ut in utramque partem non ex praejudicio Dei, sed ex meritis singularum vel poena vel praemium sit," as, "He prefers the liberty of the will to both parts, that the punishment or

⁷¹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 25.

⁷² Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 33.

⁷³ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 37.

the Reward, &c.” However, Edwards states that a right rendering of the sentence is “He prefers the free will, that on both parts the punishment or reward &c.” Edwards claims that Whitby takes no care at all to render the Greek or Latin right, and there are several similar cases in Whitby’s quotation of Jerome.⁷⁴ Besides, Edwards argues that Whitby often gathers “a few broken sayings and disjointed sentences” from Jerome’s writings without considering the context of his quotations.⁷⁵ In order to point out the problem of Whitby’s selection of Jerome’s text, Edwards also quotes a few passages from Jerome’s works which indicate Jerome’s denial of a natural ability to choose spiritual good in all fallen men. He asserts, Whitby overlooks those passages and this shows that Whitby selects the texts as he pleases.⁷⁶

(3) Third Proposition: God’s Saving Grace Is Granted Only to the Elect.

In his third proposition, Edwards argues that saving and effectual grace is bestowed only to the elect because God has decreed to choose some out of the lapsed race of mankind to the eternal life according to His good pleasure.⁷⁷ He mentions many texts of Scripture such as Acts 13:48 to prove that the nature of God’s saving grace is not universal. Accordingly, Edwards strongly opposes the Remonstrants’ argument that it ultimately depends on his will and choice whether a person is saved by divine grace or not. In opposition to them, he argues that the reason of the difference between one person and another in the matter of conversion should be ascribed to the sovereign will of God.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 39.

⁷⁵ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 40.

⁷⁶ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 38. Edwards also says that “(Whitby) hath neglected to cast an eye on other passages which go along with what he cites, and whence he might plainly have gather’d that those Fathers speak of that liberty of the will to spiritual good which is in the regenerate, and that liberty to evil which reigns in those of the contrary character: and so what the Dr. trumps up here is nothing to the purpose, to return him his own kind language.” Ibid., 33.

⁷⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 334.

⁷⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 336.

Edwards especially elaborates on the meaning of Acts 16:14 as an example in order to support his claim on the exclusive bestowing of saving grace. According to him, this verse clearly indicates that the opening of Lydia's heart was effected by an irresistible efficacy of the Spirit. However, this special grace was not certainly given to others. Thus, Edwards claims that "this is a peculiar work, and this is that which Lydia, a proselyte of the Jews, had experience of at St. Paul's preaching, when the rest of the auditors felt no such thing." In order to explain this further, Edwards distinguishes between a mere calling and an effectual calling. On this distinction, he argues that, by the latter, Lydia was effectually brought to God and saved. But those who were barely called by the gospel did not come to God.⁷⁹ That is, the general call was given to every hearer of the gospel, but the special call as an inward call was directed only to Lydia.⁸⁰ Here one can see that in contrast to the Arminian view of calling, for Edwards, the external calling of the Word is extended to all, while the internal and graciously effective calling of the Spirit is extended to the elect alone.⁸¹

Edwards then deals with some specific objections against the Reformed idea of limited application of divine grace. First, he rejects the adversaries' interpretation of Isaiah 5:4. Even though his opponents use the passage to prove the argument that God

⁷⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 338-39.

⁸⁰ This distinction is already seen in Augustine's writing. For example, Augustine states that "When, therefore, the gospel is preached, some believe, some believe not; but they who believe at the voice of the preacher from without hear of the Father from within, and learn; while they who do not believe, hear outwardly but inwardly do not hear nor learn;-that is to say, to the former it is given to believe; to the latter it is not given. Because "No man," says He, "cometh to me except the Father which sent me draw him" (John 6:44). 12. Augustine, *On the Predestination of the Saints*, Chapter 15, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff, First Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), 5:506.

⁸¹ Whitby also recognizes that there are differences among those who hear the gospel. Unlike the Reformed, however, he is not willing to place the cause of those differences at the feet of God's decree. He argues that sufficient grace is offered to all, but the grace becomes efficacious for those who accept it. Namely, sufficient grace brings about its effect because the human will cooperates with it. Whitby, *Six Discourses*, 227-78; 223-25. Consequently, for Whitby, when the same grace is offered, the reason why one is converted while the other remains unbelieving is not in the grace, but in the man's decision; one rejects the grace which the other admits. Whitby's different understanding of grace will be further dealt with in the subsequent discussions of this chapter.

grants all human beings sufficient grace to be saved, Edwards claims that “this place of Isaiah speaks only of common grace, and the external means of salvation (as the description of them in the foregoing verse shews) but these are not sufficient without the internal operation of grace on the heart.”⁸² Second, Edwards criticizes the insistence that since God’s glory is exalted by universal grace, the Reformed view of grace impinges on His glory. However, Edwards insists that it is not we but God who assigns the way of glorifying God himself; “he will be glorified in his own way, and he hath not left it to us to prescribe the manner.” Therefore, he states as follows:

... his grace is magnified by its being appropriated to some select persons. It is an enhancement of the divine goodness that it is limited to a little part of mankind, because thereby the singularity of his favour is seen, which commends it to those that partake of it, and is the matter of greater gratitude. If all men were sharers in the benefit, it would not be so great and illustrious.⁸³

Third, Edwards rejects the adversaries’ charge that the divine justice cannot be compatible with the denial of special grace to the non-elect. In opposition to this accusation, however, he argues that grace is conferred or withheld according to God’s decrees and the decree considers human beings as already fallen and sinful. Edwards thus asserts that when God withholds or denies grace to anyone, it is “on the account of his former abusing of grace.” Thus, it is not unjust for God to withhold or deny grace. Moreover, since God is “a sovereign agent,” He can give or deny grace to those whom He wishes.⁸⁴

Nevertheless, Edwards does not deny God’s conferring of “some common graces and gifts” to all men. As an example, he states that even the Pagans possess “an ability to resist temptations to sin”⁸⁵ and the example of Abimelech in Genesis 20:6 testifies to this

⁸² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 339-40.

⁸³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 342-43.

⁸⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 344.

⁸⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 336. In his distinction between special and common grace, Charnock also gives this as an example of God’s common grace to the human race: “Man hath a power by common

case. Here, he distinguishes between restraining grace and renewing grace. Edwards claims that while the former is available for all mankind, the latter is applied only to the elect.⁸⁶

Meanwhile, Whitby also differentiates between common grace and special grace. However, his understanding of the difference is very different from that of Edwards. Whitby agrees with Edwards that the former refers to the grace which is bestowed to all men without any conditions. However, unlike Edwards, he argues that common grace includes so-called prevenient grace or sufficient grace whereby all men can turn to God for salvation through the use of their free choice:

The distinction of grace into common and special may be understood two ways, viz. that grace which is afforded without any condition required on our part, as the vouchsafement of the knowledge of the gospel, and the calling men by it to the faith, may be called common grace, because it is common to all who live under the sound of the Gospel; but that grace which is suspended upon a condition, as the receiving the assistance of the Holy Spirit upon our asking, seeking, knocking for him, our receiving more upon the due improvement of the talents received, the remission of sins upon our faith and repentance, may be stiled special grace, because it only is vouchsafed to them who perform the condition; and so it is the same with grace absolute and conditional: or else that may be stiled common grace by which we are led to the faith of Christ, so it includes all those good desires which are excited in us, and all those good dispositions which are produced in the minds of men before they believe, all this grace being common to men before they are admitted into the New Covenant; and that will be special grace which is given to believers only, for the strengthening of their faith, the encreasing of their good desires, and the enabling them to live according to the Gospel.⁸⁷

grace to avoid many sins: I say, a power by common grace; for sometime, upon the neglecting the conduct of natural light, God pulls up the sluice of his restraining grace, lets out the torrent of their natural corruption upon them, which forcibly hurries them to all kind of wickedness; as it is said, Rom. Vii. 24,26, 'Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts; for this cause God gave them up to rile affections.' Wherefore, and for this cause, that is, for going contrary to that natural light they had, God let the lusts of their own hearts, which he had restrained, have their full swing a torrent." Charnock, *Regeneration*, 215.

⁸⁶ For the Reformed thinkers, unlike particular or special grace, common grace (*gratia communis*) is a nonsaving or universal grace "according to which God in his goodness bestows his favor upon all creation in the general blessings of physical sustenance and moral influence for the good" such as falling of rain on the just and the unjust and the engraved law on all men's hearts. Muller, *Dictionary*, 130. Cf. Calvin, *Institutes*, II. II. XIII; II. II. XXIV; II. II. XXII; Brakel, *Reasonable Services II*, 215.

⁸⁷ Whitby, *Six Discourses*, 224.

Indeed, Whitby denies the Reformed understanding of saving grace which extends only to those whom God has chosen to redeem. Instead, he argues that anyone who cooperates with God through common grace can further enjoy the benefits of special grace for salvation.

In sum, following a typical Reformed understanding of grace, Edwards distinguishes between common and special grace. The operation of God's common grace in human beings is universal, transcending all the states of human beings. However, unlike Whitby and his Arminian associates, he teaches that the special grace of the Holy Spirit, which refers to his saving acts toward his elect, is not given to all mankind. It applies only to those whom God elects to eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ.

(4) The Fourth Proposition: Faith and Repentance Are Human beings' Proper Acts.

Edwards' fourth proposition concerns the nature of human beings' involvement in the work of conversion. He clearly reaffirms that since their conversion and sanctification is owing to God's grace alone, man cannot influence it by his own natural power. However, Edwards also argues that "when he is acted and moved by God's spirit, he can do something, and that doing is a personal and proper action of his own."⁸⁸ More specifically, "for man being acted by God, doth really and properly act; it is he that believes and repents, and not God; and therefore believing and repenting are man's proper acts."⁸⁹ Thus, Edwards claims that even though conversion is a work of God, turning to God by faith and repentance can be also considered as an action of human beings.⁹⁰ In a word, for Edwards, "God and we are joint actors" in the work of

⁸⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 344.

⁸⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 344-45.

⁹⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 344. This, however, does not mean that faith and repentance are the principal efficient cause of salvation. For Edwards, God is the cause of salvation, and faith and repentance are conditions of men's salvation. Moreover, for Edwards, faith is a gift of God and repentance is the result of God's grace. Thus, Edwards states that "the great and principal work in justification is God's, yea, the

conversion and salvation.⁹¹ He backs up his position by references to several biblical texts such as Deuteronomy 10:16, Ezekiel 17:31, and 1 Corinthians 15:34.⁹²

(A) Distinction of Causes

Edwards claims that, in order to understand the nature of the relation between divine grace and human actions in conversion, one should distinguish different causes in the matter of regeneration, conversion, and all our virtues and grace.⁹³ Through the several distinctions of the causes, he explains how God and human beings concur harmoniously in the same work of human salvation, but “not in the same way and kind of causality.”⁹⁴ First of all, Edwards distinguishes the supreme and subordinate causes:

It can't be denied that there is a subordination in some causes; the second and inferior are subordinate to the first and superiour cause, such is God, and such is his all-powerful grace, in respect of man's will, and the powers of human nature. Both these causes cooperate, as hath been prov'd from the foremention'd texts, but the one as the chief and highest agent, and the other as the lower and inferior one. It is true there are no principal and subordinate causes in election; but in the working out of our salvation there are, and these are God and ourselves.⁹⁵

Accordingly, Edwards maintains that the work of conversion can be attributed to both God and men. He nevertheless affirms that since men as subordinate causes are placed

sole work is his, as he is the supreme, the first and original cause. It is He that justifieth, and non else: He by way of principal efficiency. And thus justification is the act of God, and not of men. But then it is as true, that there is something belonging to us as we are subordinate, secondary and subservient agents. The lesser, inferior and instrumental work is ours. That is, tho' God alone be the justifier of him that believeth (as the Apostle speaks) yet it is the divine appointment that our faith should be made use of in justification, and we cannot be justified without it.” Edwards, *The Doctrine of Faith and Justification*, 233-34. Accordingly, even though conditions are present in the work of conversion, the conditions are not efficient causes. For Edwards' detailed explanation of the nature of faith, see his *The Doctrine of Faith and Justification*.

⁹¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 347.

⁹² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 345.

⁹³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 347. Edwards comments that “This is a difficult point, and hath created many controversies, but I conceive the deciding of it depends on the distinguishing between these several sorts of causes.” *Ibid.*, 352.

⁹⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 348.

⁹⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 348.

under God as the supreme cause, they can “lay no claim to what he doth in way of supremacy.”⁹⁶

Second, Edwards employs the distinction between the first and second causes:

God is the first, and man the second cause in this great work we are speaking of. These two do not exclude one another, for a first cause is not inconsistent with a secondary one, nay it supposes it. God acts, and we act; he first and then we: and we cannot act or work till we be set on work. The first grace, by which we are enabled to believe, and are converted, is from God alone; but afterwards, our wills being renew'd and regenerated, they become a principle of action, and they co-operate with God's grace in our salvation.⁹⁷

Certainly, for Edwards, since men are dead in sin, they cannot cooperate with God from the very beginning of salvation. However, once men receive power from God to work, they

can “act in concurrence with him, that is, they move and act in a secondary way, and with relation to the first mover...”⁹⁸ In this regard, God's grace as “the immediate and first cause” and human will as “the second and remote cause” are concurrent causes.⁹⁹

Edwards, nonetheless, emphasizes the priority of the causes between God and human beings: God's action is the first and human beings follows:

Now we know that if God be the first cause, we who are second causes, cannot effect any thing before him or without him. It is absurd and contradictory in the very terms to say, that the second cause hath place before the first cause: wherefore when we make our selves the first cause and actors in conversion, we talk irrationally, and contradict ourselves.¹⁰⁰

Third, Edwards distinguishes the difference between “God as the original and independent cause” and “man as acting from and by him.” Unlike previous distinction, this does not consider the priority of the causes. Instead, this distinction refers to “the

⁹⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 348.

⁹⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 349.

⁹⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 349.

⁹⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 349-50.

¹⁰⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 349.

dependence” which the latter has upon the former. That is, “God himself is beholding to none, but man derives all his power and ability to act from him. We are perpetually influenced by divine grace, the will ever stands in need of supernatural help and assistance.”¹⁰¹ Thus, Edwards claims that even though men believe and repent, these acts were impossible without being acted by God; “our strength is derivative, we fetch all our power from divine grace, and we depend continually on God in our actings.”¹⁰²

In spite of this dependence, however, Edwards once again strongly asserts that the work of God does not deny the role of the secondary human cause in human conversion:

We can do nothing by our own native strength, but being renew’d and chang’d by the Holy Spirit, we can do all that is commanded us. And that which is thus done by divine aid, is our doing: for the asserting of a first and independent cause doth not take away the operation of a second and dependent cause. A new life is put into us by God, which renders us active and vigorous; but this is our life, for what is freely given us is ours. The spirit moves and excites us, and enables us to do our duty, and this doing our duty is our own act.¹⁰³

Fourth, Edwards makes a difference between principal and instrumental causes: God and men concur in human salvation, but the former as the principal cause, and the latter as instrumental causes. He explains this distinction as follows:

We are instruments in his hands; he makes us subservient to our salvation. Thus, the same spiritual actions (as we see in the fore-mention’d texts) are ascrib’d to God and to man, and that rightly, because they are from both, but in the different way. God is said to do these things, and we are said to do them; the former as the principal agent, the latter as the instrumental and auxiliary. With respect to the one, conversion is the sole work of God, for there is no principal agency and causality but his, and man contributes nothing towards this. But with respect to the other, that is, the bare instrumentality and subserviency, man is an agent and cause in that work.¹⁰⁴

Edwards further clarifies the nature of instrumental cause as “tho’ the instrumental cause be not so excellent and worthy as the chief efficient cause, yet it is as requisite in the way

¹⁰¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 350.

¹⁰² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 350.

¹⁰³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 350.

¹⁰⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 351.

of an instrument, as the other is as to its peculiar causality.”¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, he claims that the instrumental cause cannot produce the effect by itself unless it is moved and set in work by the principal cause.¹⁰⁶

Edwards finally concludes that God and human beings are joint actors in the work of conversion:

We are inferior, subordinate, second, dependent, and instrumental causes; but God can do infinitely more, and that which we can't possibly do, as he is the supreme, first, independent, and principal cause.... They both do it in a different manner, as they are different causes... God and man are concurrent causes of one and the same effect, that is, they are joint-causes of salvation. God is not a cause or agent in our salvation as we are, nor is it possible that we should lay claim to that causality which is proper to him. We must not share with God in the glory of this work. The honour is not to be divided between the creator and the creature.¹⁰⁷

Other Reformed writers also distinguish between God's cause and human cause to explain the nature of regeneration or conversion. For example, Bucanus asserts that the Holy Spirit is “the efficient cause” and the word of God is “instrumental cause.”¹⁰⁸ He quotes Ezekiel 36:26 and Romans 10:17 to support his claim, respectively. However, Bucanus argues that human will is “the instrumental cause” because “being renewed and moved by the Holy Spirit, it also works together [with the Holy Spirit] and moves itself.”¹⁰⁹

As with Edwards, Turretin insists that while God is “the principal cause,” mankind is “the proximate and immediate cause.” That is, even though, in the first stage

¹⁰⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 351.

¹⁰⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 352.

¹⁰⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 352.

¹⁰⁸ “Quae sunt igitur causae conversionis nostrae? Efficiens princeps & causa per se efficax, una est, nempe Spiritus Sanctus, de quo Ezech. 36.26. ... Instrumentalis seu medium, est Verbum Dei, Rom. 10. 27....” Gulielmus Bucanus, *Institutiones theologicae seu locorum communium christianae religionis* (Geneva, 1648), XIII, XI (181).

¹⁰⁹ “Non enim voluntas subiectum tantum est operationis divinae, quam Spiritus Sanctus in Electis exercet, sed etiam instrumentum tale, quod a Spiritu Sancto renovatum & motum ipsum quoque una operator, & sese movet.” Bucanus, *Institutiones*, XIII, XI (181).

of conversion, God changes human heart without any cooperation from human beings.

After this step of regeneration, God as the principal cause and human beings as the proximate and immediate cause concur in the work of conversion. However, they concur as the different causes and, thus, in different ways.¹¹⁰ Thus, Turretin argues that “although the act of believing is produced by God, yet because it is exercised by man as the proximate cause, it is ascribed not to God, but to man.”¹¹¹

Charnock argues that God is the first cause and human beings are the second cause in regeneration. He maintains that if human will were the first cause of regeneration, God would not be “the supreme independent cause” in regeneration which is “the noblest of his works.” However, it would be impossible because anything which happens in the world depends on “the conduct and efficacy of God’s providence,” that is, “the will, power, and wisdom of God.”¹¹² Thus, since God is “the supreme cause” in everything else, human will is “an inferior and secondary cause” in the work of conversion.¹¹³ Moreover, Charnock asserts that if the will of man were the first cause, God would be “an attendant to” the creature in this noblest work. If God’s work would be consequent upon the choice of human will, it would make God the second cause and, consequently, would follow that “God concurs not to regeneration by way of sovereignty, but by way of concomitancy.” However, quoting Romans 11:36, Charnock claims that

¹¹⁰ Concerning this, Turretin states that “However although in every instance God and man concur, still they concur in different ways. God is the sole cause of habitual conversion. He effects it by the heart-turning power of his Spirit without any cooperation from man. Here man (since it treats of his renewal) is only passive and subjective inasmuch as he is a mere subject receiving the action of God. But with respect to the actual, the principal cause is indeed God, but the proximate and immediate cause is man, who (excited by the Holy Spirit and imbued with the habits of faith and love) believes and loves.” Turretin, *Instituto*, XV. IV. XV.

¹¹¹ Turretin, *Instituto*, XV. IV. XV.

¹¹² Charnock specifically states that “God is the first cause, upon whom man depends in all kind of actions, much more in supernatural actions, chiefly in the understanding and will, upon which faculties no creature can have any intrinsic influence to cause them to exercise their vital acts.” Charnock, *Regeneration*, 188.

¹¹³ Charnock, *Regeneration*, 188.

God as the first mover is the cause of human willing and choice,¹¹⁴ and effects the will's free motion through not a "precarious" but a "victorious" grace which ensures the outcome of the working. Thus, for him, God is the first cause of regeneration whereas human beings are the second cause of it.¹¹⁵

The implication of Edwards' and other Reformed thinkers' distinctions between God's cause and human cause is significant because it shows that even though Edwards acknowledges the absolute role of sovereign grace in the work of conversion, he does not deny the role of the secondary causes. That is, while he puts stress on the sovereign grace of God, Edwards never loses sight of the human aspects, response or responsibility embodied in the Reformed tradition. Hence, he would confess that conversion occurs by the sovereign grace of God. At the same time, however, Edwards would be willing to confess that it happens in perfect harmony with men as the secondary causes. Consequently, his discussion of the different causes in conversion indicates that Edwards never does lose the Reformed balance between the sovereign grace of God and human response or between grace and nature.

(B) Whether We Are Passive or Active in the Work of Conversion

In order to clarify the relation between divine grace and human action in the work of salvation, Edwards next discusses in detail the power or ability of the will at one's conversion. According to him, when compared with God's activity, human will is not an

¹¹⁴ Charnock writes further that "He is the first governor of all wills and powers of the creatures, the first cause of all motions. He orders all, without being ordered by any. Now this is below the majesty of God, to be conducted in his motion by the will of the creature; to have the purposes of his goodness brought into act by an uncertain and slippery cause. How can it be conceived that God should put his hand to the more ignoble works of nature, and turn over the noblest work of the new creation to the airy will of the creature." Charnock, *Regeneration*, 189.

¹¹⁵ Charnock, *Regeneration*, 189. Charnock adds that to make the will of man the efficient cause or prime cause of his regeneration would impair "the wisdom of God" (189), would deprive God of his foreknowledge and prescience (190), and would "make the truth of God a great uncertainty" (191). Charnock, *Regeneration*, 189-91.

active but a passive subject in regeneration.¹¹⁶ In other words, the will possesses not active but passive power or ability at the first moment of one's conversion. For Edwards, therefore, regeneration occurs not because human beings co-operate with God. Rather regeneration is the sovereign work of God. He asserts that even the power to respond comes from God. In this sense, conversion is the work of God, a work in which the will does not simply co-operate. Therefore, as already examined in chapter 3, one of the clearest points Edwards makes in his writings is that the offer of the gospel in preaching and the sincere call to obedience does not imply that human beings have the free choice to respond and fulfill what has been commanded.

However, Edwards argues that human beings are not wholly passive in the work of conversion:

If we take conversion in the full extent and latitude of that term, as it comprehends not only the first entrance into a state of grace, but the continuance in it, and persevering in a life of holiness, we cannot say that it is altogether a passive thing, or that man is wholly passive in it. For God in the matter of our salvation makes use of us as sensible creatures and intelligent beings, as acting under him, as inferior and subordinate agents, as dependent and derivative, as secondary and instrumental causes. In this sphere it is certain that we act, and therefore we may state the foregoing question from what hath been said under the last heads, and conclude that we are not wholly passive.¹¹⁷

Therefore, in order to resolve the issue, Edwards distinguishes two different "branches" in the conversion of a sinner: "his first entrance into it," and "his continuing in the state of sanctification."¹¹⁸ With regard to the former, Edwards claims that it is passive:

... because the first effectual turning of the soul to God and holiness is the mere work of God himself. For in order to conversion there is necessary the exciting and preventing grace of God, which is always before the acts of a man's own will. For the will, by reason of its natural pravity, is averse to goodness, and acts contrary to the spirit of holiness; wherefore it is requisite that this faculty of the soul be moved

¹¹⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 352-54.

¹¹⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 352-53.

¹¹⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 352.

and wrought upon by the grace of God; and this moving and working are the first essays of conversion. Whence it is evident that we are merely passive as to this.¹¹⁹

Edwards does not deny “the mere preparatory acts, and those means which are used in order to this great change, for in these or in some part of them man hath an agency, and doth really do something.”¹²⁰ He, however, clearly rejects the distinction between various quantities of grace designated as operating, preventing, co-operating, and subsequent grace, which insinuates that human beings, by his own nature, desire good in some degree, though ineffectually.¹²¹ When individuals respond and receive the grace of God, it is not because they are co-operating with operating grace by exercising their free choice, which, will lead to subsequent grace. Instead, Edwards claims that the effectual turn and actual change of the will as the first step of conversion and regeneration is from God alone and they are God’s work wholly. Therefore, Edwards asserts that “man is no agent

¹¹⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 353-54.

¹²⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 353.

¹²¹ Whitby, for instance, argues that the grace of the Holy Spirit is given to all men, so that even the unregenerate may desire and do true spiritual good. On the basis of this universal operation of God’s grace which transcends all the states of man, he distinguishes it between “exciting,” “preventing,” “assisting,” and “subsequent” grace of God. This distinction reflects that Whitby emphasizes the continuity of grace without any qualitative difference. That is, according to him, they are not different but the same kind of grace which is distinguished only by different quantity. Thus, in his distinction between sufficient and efficient grace, Whitby states that “The distinction of grace into sufficient and efficacious grace is not ... a distinction of grace into different kinds or species, but only a distinction of the same kind of grace, according to its accidentally different effects, all efficacious grace being sufficient, and all sufficient grace being such as would be efficacious, did not the indisposition of the patient hinder the effect of it.” Whitby, *Six Discourses*, 224. Hence, for Whitby, “exciting,” “preventing,” “assisting,” and “subsequent” grace of God are all efficacious in their place only if man rightly responds to each grace in its proper place. Otherwise, man cannot receive more grace than is necessary to be saved. Consequently, Whitby’s distinction of grace certainly differs from that of the Augustinian and Reformed tradition. Nevertheless, unlike Arminius, Whitby neither gives any definition of sufficient or efficient grace nor provides a further detailed explanation of it. Cf. Concerning the nature of sufficient grace, Arminius says that “Sufficient grace must necessarily be laid down; yet this sufficient grace, through the fault of him to whom it is granted [*contingit*], does not [always] obtain its effect. Were the fact otherwise, the justice of God could not be defended in his condemning those who do not believe.” James Arminius, “Examination of Perkins’s Pamphlet,” in *The Works of Arminius*, trans. William Nichols (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 3:450. In contrast, Arminius explains about the efficacious grace that “By efficacious grace is meant not that which is received of necessity and cannot be refused, but that which is certainly accepted and is rejected by no one to whom it is applied.” Arminius, “Certain Articles to Be Diligently Examined and Weighed,” in *The Works of Arminius*, trans. William Nichols (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 2:721-22. The distinction between the sufficient and the efficacious graces also shows that it has nothing to do with any qualitative difference. Arminius, “Perkins’s,” 450.

in the first successful inclining of the will; there is no concurrency, no co-operation of his in this act. God here is the sole efficient author, and humanity is the passive subject.”¹²²

However, as noted above, Edwards claims that with respect to “the progress and continuance in the state of conversion,” human beings are active as well as passive; “we are more active than passive.” This is possible because human will is changed. He states that human will, being moved and set on work by the grace of God, cooperates and concurs with the subsequent grace of God in order to produce “the acts of piety and holiness,” “tho’ in a way of different causality.”¹²³ He continues to state as follows:

For in this second conversion God enables us to put forth personal acts, to believe and repent, and lead a holy life, and to do all that he requires of us. We must do these ourselves, that is, in our own persons. God cannot believe, and repent, and obey for us; he is not capable of doing these. Therefore they are our own proper acts, yet so as they are performed by the special assistance of the spirit.¹²⁴

In short, in Edwards’ understanding, men have no free choice in accepting, rejecting, finding or not finding grace. But once grace acts on them, they begin to have free choice in terms of saving good. More specifically, in scholastic terms, men have no free choice (or power of contrary choice in spiritual matters) in *conversio passiva* – they have no free choice about finding grace or not. However, once men have conversion, it opens up their free choice again and they begin to have free choice in *conversio activa*.¹²⁵ In actual fact, therefore, far from annulling freedom, grace restores and effects freedom.

¹²² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 353.

¹²³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 354.

¹²⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 354-55. Edwards similarly states that “thus in all spiritual actions we are patients and we are agents: we are the former, as God acts in us, and powerfully assits us; and we are the latter, is our faculties are our own, and as we freely exert them; for even the first influx of grace is not prejudicial to our freedom. Tho’ then we are passive, yet it is not so to be understood as if we were void of will and choice.” *Ibid.*, 355.

¹²⁵ However, this distinction indicates not a temporal priority but a logical priority. Cf. Muller, *Dictionary*, 82-83. In his refutation of the Reformed doctrine of grace, Whitby fails to recognize the Reformed’s distinction between *conversio passiva* and *activa*. Thus, he erroneously charges the Reformed that “men are purely passive in the whole of their conversion, and so are utterly void of all power of believing, living to God or performing any acceptable obedience to his commands....” Whitby, *Six Discourses*, 238.

Nevertheless, Edwards insists that the entirety of salvation should be ascribed to the work of God because even “the progress and continuance in the state of conversion” is ultimately the sole result of divine grace as well:

The true account is, that in the business of conversion and salvation, we are neither altogether active, nor purely passive; but God moves our wills, and then we will and act: and even this willing and acting are from God. For as the power or faculty is from God, so the action, or exerting of the faculty is from him. As before there was preventing and exciting grace, so now the same is continu’d; and besides this, there is concomitant and assiting grace. So that whether we regard the first beginnings of conversions, or the progress that is made afterwards, we must acknowledge them to be the sole result of divine grace. It is this that antecedently stirs up the soul, and it is this that, by a subsequent influence, concurs to the very producing the acts of holiness: and we have no power to exert these acts without a supernatural help accompanying us continually.¹²⁶

This statement clearly shows that even though Edwards acknowledges the active part of human beings in the work of conversion, he is indeed a monergist who denounces co-operating with God’s grace especially apart from the added concern of co-earning.¹²⁷

Edwards teaches that the problem of why some are converted but others are not is consequently resolved here because (1) salvation “depends on that special grace and that particular and peculiar influence and efficacy whereby the will is powerfully moved and determined to that which is good,” and (2) God does not bestow this grace to all.¹²⁸

Other Reformed theologians commonly follow the distinction between *conversio passiva* and *conversio activa*. For instance, in his explanation of the power or ability of the will at one’s conversion, Vermigli argues that the human will is not an active but a passive subject in the process of regeneration when compared with God’s activity.¹²⁹ In

¹²⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 355.

¹²⁷ Consequently, Edwards strongly opposes the idea that people need to supplement the grace of God or that they can do good independently of grace. However, Edwards does not deny that people, moved by grace, willingly obey righteousness, do good, and are rewarded. Only in this sense he did believe in cooperation with grace.

¹²⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 355.

¹²⁹ Vermigli, “Free Will,” 305.

other words, the will possesses not active but passive power or ability at one's regeneration because it is actively changed by God. However, it is by no means involuntary. Concerning this, Vermigli states as follows:

If one asks whether Paul was drawn by free will at his conversion.... I say that the proposition is ambiguous and cannot be satisfied by a simple answer. If asked through which part of the spirit God began to heal Paul and convert him, I gladly concede it to be the free will, that is the will and understanding which concur passively in this renewal. But if I am asked whether Paul was drawn by free will as the active principle by which he might cooperate in his initial renewal and preparation, I deny that the drawing was by free will, especially regarding the first moment of change.¹³⁰

Vermigli calls a passive power of this kind (the passive movement of reason and the will) “a power of obedience (*potential obedientialis*).” It means that “we are capable of a divine change when God wills to effect it.”¹³¹ Following Augustine, Vermigli teaches that “For we have it from nature that we can be changed passively by God, but that we are changed in fact is of grace.”¹³² He therefore refutes the idea that the unregenerate must strive to believe since the promises are offered to them. For him, it is impossible to believe in Christ unless we are reformed by the Holy Spirit.¹³³ Vermigli teaches that grace alone is the ground of salvation, that human beings are incapable of inaugurating the work of salvation, and that faith itself is the result of God's gracious activity.

As with Edwards, Bucanus also uses the distinction between *conversio passiva* and *conversio activa* to clarify the state of the human will in conversion:

What is the state of man's will in conversion, active or purely passive? With respect to the grace which comes from without a man and precedes, so far as it is not yet beginning to be regenerate, the will is in a purely passive state.... But as regards the time at which the conversion actually takes place the will is not like a log. But when healed by the Holy Spirit it also is in an active state; i.e. the will in conversion is not

¹³⁰ Vermigli, “Free Will,” 305.

¹³¹ Vermigli, “Free Will,” 306.

¹³² Vermigli, “Free Will,” 306.

¹³³ Vermigli, “Free Will,” 305-06.

idle or motionless or insensible (like a statue), but follows the Spirit who draws it. God brings it about at the same moment, that by grace we will and really will, that is, He moves and bends our will and secures that we really will: yet in such wise that the whole effectiveness of the action is and remains with God's Spirit.¹³⁴

In a similar vein to Edwards and others, Ames states that from a human perspective, "receiving of Christ" can be considered as either passive or active. He asserts that the former refers to the process by which "a spiritual principle of grace is generated in the will of man." Ames claims that in this first moment of conversion, the human will "plays the role neither of a free agent nor a natural bearer, but only of an obedient subject." On the contrary, however, he maintains that the latter ("active receiving") indicates "an elicited act of faith in which he who is called now wholly leans upon Christ as his savior and through Christ upon God." According to Ames, therefore, this active receiving of Christ through faith "depends partly upon an inborn principle or attitude toward grace and partly upon the action of God moving before and stirring up."¹³⁵

As with other Reformed theologians, Turretin also differentiates between a passive side and an active side in conversion:

Habitual or passive conversion takes place by the infusion of supernatural habits by the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, actual or active conversion takes place by the exercise of these good habits by which the acts of faith and repentance are both given by God and elicited from man. Through the former, man is renovated and converted by God. Through the latter, man, renovated and converted by God, turns himself to God and performs acts. The former is more properly called regeneration because it is like a new birth by which the man is reformed after the image of his Creator. The latter, however, is called conversion because it includes the operation of the man himself. Now although in the order of time, they can scarcely be distinguished in adults (in whom the action of God converting man is never without the action of man

¹³⁴ "Quomodo voluntas hominis habet se in conversione, activene, an mere passive? Respectu gratiae extrinsecus advenientis & praevenientis, voluntas, quatenus nondum coepit renasci, habet se mere passive ... Sed respectu temporis, quo sit ipsa conversio, voluntas non habet se ut truncus, sed dum sanatur a Spiritu Sancto, habet se etiam active, id est, voluntas in conversionis actu, non est otiose, neque sine ullo motu aut sensu (ut statua) sed sequitur trahentem Sp. Sanctum. Nam eodem momento efficit Deus, ut per gratiam velimus, & reipsa velimus: sic tamen ut penes Spiritum Dei tota sit & maneat actionis efficacia." Bucanus, *Institutiones*, XVIII, X (180).

¹³⁵ Ames, *Marrow of Theology*, 159.

turning himself to God), still in the order of nature and of causality the habitual ought to precede the actual and the action of God the action of man.¹³⁶

To elaborate, for Turretin, man is merely passive in the first moment of conversion and cannot cooperate with the grace of God at all.¹³⁷ Namely, in this first stage, since man is said to be dead in sin, he/she is “the passive subject of another’s operation, not as the principle of his own operation.”¹³⁸ He maintains that God himself or the Holy Spirit is the only efficient cause in this very moment of conversion.¹³⁹ Thus, Turretin strongly rejects his adversaries’ idea that, even in the first step of conversion, man can cooperate with efficacious grace with his own free choice so that the cause of regenerating work can be ascribed not only to grace, but also to human free choice.¹⁴⁰

However, Turretin also argues that man is not the mere passive subject in the second stage of conversion. He teaches that once “the new qualities” are infused, man becomes a “free active instrument of his own actions.”¹⁴¹ Now, man can cooperate with God or operate under him. Thus, Turretin states that “Indeed he actually believes and converts himself to God; while being acted upon, he acts; and being regenerated and moved by God, he moves himself to the exercise of the new life.”¹⁴² Consequently, he

¹³⁶ Turretin, *Institutio*, XV. IV. XIII.

¹³⁷ Turretin, *Institutio*, XV.V.II. He also regards men “as a receiving subject and not as an acting principle.” Ibid.

¹³⁸ Turretin, *Institutio*, XV.V. XVIII.

¹³⁹ Turretin, *Institutio*, XV.V. XVIII.

¹⁴⁰ Turretin, *Institutio*, XV.V. XVIII. Turretin specifically writes that “the Romanists, Socinians, Remonstrants and other offshoots of the Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians” follow this view. Turretin, *Institutio*, XV.V. XVIII. He categorizes them as Synergist in that they all argue, the free will of man in calling has a certain cooperation (synergeian) and concourse with the grace of God. Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Turretin, *Institutio*, XV.V. XVIII.

¹⁴² He elaborates this further: “Thus man holds himself here, both passively to receive the motion of prevenient and exciting grace for the will does not act unless acted upon and actively and efficiently because he actually believes and works under God. Still thus he is said to be the cause of his own conversion that he is not such from himself, but from grace, both because the power of believing is only from God and because the very act of believing depends upon God himself exciting the faculty to its operation. Hence nothing can be concluded from this for the power of free will.” Turretin, *Institutio*, XV. IV. XV.

avoids two extremes: either complete denial of the role of human beings or elevation of human will as the efficient cause in the work of salvation:

Although man cannot cooperate with God calling, it does not follow either that all diligence and zeal in the exercise and cherishing of faith is taken away or that the precepts and promises have no place; or that they are not to be praised who will to believe and repent and that they do not sin who are unwilling. (1) The diligence and zeal of man do not pertain to man's cooperating with God when he is first converted; but that, excited and converted by God, he may act and work out his own salvation. (2) The precepts and promises are rules of duty, not a measure of strength and no faculty is derived from the precept or strength from duty. For God most wisely admonishes man both of his duty and impotence by his commands and employs them as means to bring about what he commands.¹⁴³

In sum, Edwards and many Reformed theologians argue that man can be considered either as an active or a passive subject according to the different moments of conversion.¹⁴⁴ Particularly, like his consideration of the different causes in conversion, Edwards' use of the scholastic distinction between *conversio passiva* and *activa* indicates that he does not reduce man to a passive pawn or senseless stock in the work of conversion as the opponents of the Reformed theology have argued.

(C) Irresistible Nature of Grace and Human Freedom

If man must be viewed solely as passive in the first moment of conversion, and is but merely the object and thus the recipient of divine operation, man can only be considered to be a stock and a block? In other words, if God's grace works effectually and irresistibly, does it impinge on the freedom of human choice in the matter of conversion? The question which naturally flows from the previous discussion is significant for this study because it directly confronts previous criticism that Reformed doctrine of conversion destroys human freedom.

¹⁴³ Turretin, *Institutio*, XV. V. XVII.

¹⁴⁴ See also Rijssenius, *Summa theologiae*, XIII, 18, (3); Brakel, *Reasonable Services* II, 222; Owen, *The Holy Spirit*, 320, 322; Boston, *The Body of Divinity*, 474.

Actually, concerning the doctrine of grace, the primary disagreement between the Reformed and the Arminians lies in the question of whether grace is irresistible or not. This is also the case for the debate between Edwards and Whitby. Both Edwards and Whitby insist that without grace, it is not possible for the will to exercise faith or to repent from sin. However, Whitby was adamant that saving grace, though a complete gift from God, is a resistible gift.¹⁴⁵ Thus, the resistibility of grace is the key difference between Edwards and Whitby on the doctrine of grace.¹⁴⁶

Moreover, Whitby argues that if God determines human wills, this would in effect remove the freedom of choice.¹⁴⁷ According to him, many passages of Scripture make it plain that humanity can and often does freely resist God's grace. Rather than destroying free will, God's grace governs and steers the human will in the right direction.¹⁴⁸ For Whitby, however, this operation of grace is synergistic in the sense that the human will either cooperates by not resisting or refuses to cooperate by resisting it. That is, if man does not give his consent, prevenient and sufficient grace cannot succeed and become efficacious. In order to be saved, human beings must play his role. Otherwise, grace is not efficacious because it does not force them to believe.

In contrast, Edwards pointedly refutes the idea that conversion remains so in the power of man that he can receive or reject divine grace and thus convert or not convert

¹⁴⁵ Whitby, *Six Discourses*, 224.

¹⁴⁶ This was true to the case of Arminius; the controversy is not about what grace does in its operation, but whether a person can resist its operation. For example, Arminius says that "The efficacy of saving grace is not consistent with that omnipotent act of God, by which He so inwardly acts in the heart and mind of man, that he on whom that act is impressed cannot do any other than consent to God who calls him. Or, which is the same thing, grace is not an irresistible force." Arminius, "Certain Article," 722.

¹⁴⁷ Whitby, *Six Discourses*, 312-13. Whitby says that "If the divine motion doth necessitate the will, then is there no power in the will to do otherwise, and so there is no freedom either in that will, or that complacency which necessarily follows upon that divine impulse." Ibid., 312.

¹⁴⁸ Whitby, *Six Discourses*, 212-13; 217; 240. Concerning this, Arminius says that "'The Author of grace has determined not to force men by His grace to assent, but by a sweet and gentle suasion to move them; which motion not only does not take away the free consent [*liberum consensum*] of a free will [*liberi arbitrii*], but even strengthens it." Arminius, "Perkins's," 450; idem, *Opera*, 594.

himself. He strongly maintains that efficacious grace so works in man that “although he cannot help resisting from the beginning, still he can never resist it so far as to finally overcome it and hinder the work of conversion.” Because of Whitby’s stress on the resistible nature of grace contra the Reformed teaching, Edwards accuses him of a Pelagian. According to him, Whitby’s opinion brings back the very error of Pelagius, who transferred the principal cause of conversion to the free choice of mankind.¹⁴⁹

In order to answer the question whether God’s grace in conversion removes human freedom, Edwards first discusses why God’s grace is irresistible in nature. First of all, he insists that since offering grace is “an omnipotent act,” it cannot be resisted. Edwards states that “After a short struggle we must necessarily comply, and yield ourselves conquered; for to defeat omnipotency is impossible: yea, the more we struggle, the more we shall feel the power of the divine arm.”¹⁵⁰ Second, Edwards asserts that this efficacious power of divine grace is designed to achieve the conversion and salvation of the elect, and, therefore, it should be irresistible.¹⁵¹ Third, he maintains that all passages in Scripture which describe the conversion of men clearly prove the irresistible nature of grace.¹⁵² Edwards presents a number of biblical verses such as John 6:44, 1 Corinthians 15:10, and Philippians 2:13.¹⁵³ Therefore, according to him, the scriptural testimonies clearly condemn the Arminians who exalt human power above God’s power and sovereignty.¹⁵⁴ Edwards here particularly rejects the Arminians’ interpretation of Acts 7:51. According to him, the meaning of the phrase “resist the Holy Spirit” is that “they gave not heed to the outward means of salvation, to the word which was preach’d by the

¹⁴⁹ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrine Condemn’d*, 26.

¹⁵⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 357.

¹⁵¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 358.

¹⁵² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 359.

¹⁵³ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 53.

¹⁵⁴ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 51.

prophets, who were inspir'd by the Holy Ghost.” Thus, it does not signify that “the inward power of the Spirit” can be resisted in the Holy Spirit’s designs to convert any person. He quotes Isaiah 14:27 and 43:13 to support his argument.¹⁵⁵ Fourth, quoting Augustine, Vossius, Jerome, and Prosper, Edwards asserts that many Church Fathers asserted the irresistible operation of divine grace.¹⁵⁶ In particular, he insists that all the Fathers who believed the omnipotent power of God also claimed this doctrine because they held that infinite power cannot be resisted by finite power.¹⁵⁷

In this way, following Augustinian tradition, Edwards robustly claims the irresistibility of divine grace. For him, once the special grace is given to the elect, he/she cannot resist it. Edwards maintains that the elect cannot but receive the grace of God. Unlike Whitby, therefore, he claims that the internal call is “effectual.” When God calls the elect by his grace, the person elected cannot but answer the call because of the nature of irresistible grace in regeneration. Thus, this special grace of God not only enables man to respond positively to the gospel but also makes him actually respond to it. It does not hinge on our power or free choice to refuse or accept the grace of God offered to us.

Edwards, however, clearly argues that the irresistible grace of God does not take away human freedom:

The way of God’s dealing with men, is agreeable to their rational nature; and accordingly the work of grace, and the influx of the Holy Ghost on the will, are not in a physical way, but such as is adapted to the rational powers of mankind. The mind is enlightned, the affections excited, and the will determin’d by proper motives; and so a man is wrought upon in a way that is congruous to his nature. And thus conversion is free, and yet irresistible; for tho it is not in the power of man to resist it, to disbelieve and disobey, yet he doth all most freely. Thus God’s powerful and efficacious concurrence is not inconsistent with the liberty of man’s will; because his

¹⁵⁵ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 51.

¹⁵⁶ Edwards adds that this is professed by the Second Council of Milevi (416). He also quotes Bishop Beveridge’s statement. Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 44.

¹⁵⁷ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 47.

will is enclin'd and determin'd in that manner which suits with it, and with the faculties of his soul.¹⁵⁸

Edwards elaborates this further as follows:

God infuses such grace into the will, as changes it, and thereby it is easily determin'd to what is good. The former corrupt inclination and propension of the will are taken away, and this faculty is held and renew'd, and so becomes the principle of good and holy actions. If the nature of it were not chang'd, then indeed there would be a force on the will (I mean such a force as would destroy the freedom of it) in conversion, and in all other works of grace on the soul; but God by changing it, makes it freely comply with his grace. There is no violence offered to the will, and indeed, properly speaking, cannot; for a forced will is no will.¹⁵⁹

Indeed, in Edwards' understanding, the human will is incoercible and conversion is a matter of regenerating the will. Namely, divine grace does not force the will but changes it.¹⁶⁰ Thus, even though man cannot will to make himself will well, grace can enable him to make himself will well. More precisely, when it comes to salvation, grace does not simply make human beings able; it makes a human will willing; "God makes the will, which was unwilling, to be willing: So he overthrows not the nature of our wills, but lets them act freely. Thus the divine concurrence and man's free choice are reconciled."¹⁶¹ Therefore, for Edwards, rather than destroying human freedom, the operation of irresistible grace restores human free choice. In addition, Edwards insists that "Our being

¹⁵⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 361-62.

¹⁵⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 362. Edwards also writes that "He opens their hearts by enlightening and persuading them; by causing them to submit freely and voluntarily to the motions of the spirit." Ibid., 363. "God enlightens mens minds, and enclines their hearts in such a way as doth not exclude their own free consent." Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Edwards comments that "Which is a very false and mistaken notion; for at such a time the will is not forc'd, but chang'd, and thereby determin'd to what is good, by a new biass or principle bestow'd on it. The former bent and inclination is remove'd, and another is kindly introduc'd by the powerful grace of God, whereby the will becomes obedient to the heavenly call, and acts most freely and willingly." Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 48.

¹⁶¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 363. He also writes that "But the will is, by the grace of God, of evil made good, of unwilling made willing; (which could never have been done by its own power) and so it freely assents to and embraces whatever God propounds to it, to be assented to and embraced. In a word, God doth not force, but change men's wills; and this he effects in an irresistible manner, otherwise man would be stronger than God, and man would do more toward the work of conversion, than God himself." Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 364.

determin'd by God to will that which he wills is the height of the Christian liberty; so far is it from impairing it, yea destroying it, as the Dr. fondly imagines.”¹⁶² He, consequently, argues that the irresistible nature of divine grace is compatible with the free choice of mankind:

That tho' converting and effectual grace doth not leave the will of man at liberty to resist, yet he acts voluntarily and freely; for this powerful grace of God removes that which wou'd make resistance: and so the nature of man's will is not destroy'd, his free choice and liberty are preferr'd, and these are not inconsistent with irresistibility. For certainly God's infinite and unlimited power, is not incompatible with that of ours, which his finite and restrain'd; and this must needs submit to that.¹⁶³

However, Edwards admits human limitation in understanding the matter. Thus, he asserts that man cannot fully understand the exact manner of conversion:

... yet it is to be acknowledg'd, that it is impossible for human understanding to reach the exact manner of God's influencing on mens wills. We cannot have an adequate conception of the nature of the effectual grace of God working on man in conversion, seeing the holy Scripture hath not discovered it to us.¹⁶⁴

Interestingly, moreover, Edwards raises the possibility of some exceptions that do not follow the ordinary and general way in the work of conversion: “For tho' we have a general account of it, yet we may gather from the variety of God's dispensations with men that there are particular exceptions.” Nevertheless, he argues as follows:

But the incomprehensibleness or ignorance of the manner of it ought not to hinder our firm belief of the thing itself, because the Bible hath given us a general notice of, and insight into the nature of regeneration and conversion, tho' it is silent as to the particular mode and circumstances of God's working these in us.¹⁶⁵

Here, for the better understanding of Edwards, it would be helpful to examine other Reformed theologians' view of the relation between irresistible grace and human

¹⁶² Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 50.

¹⁶³ Edwards, *Arminian Doctrines*, 50.

¹⁶⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 364. Edwards acknowledges that “Wherefore it is in vain to wrangle here, and to enter into solemn contests and altercations; for after all our disputes, some difficulties will remain, and we may not think to resolve them, we may not presume by dint of reason to decide them.” Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 365.

freedom. Brakel, for instance, acknowledges that man “cooperates no more than did the body of Adam in receiving the soul, and as Lazarus did in his resurrection.” However, he maintains that man cannot be considered as “a block nor a stock” because man as a rational being has the intellect and the will, and is thus “a suitable object to be the recipient of God’s operations toward conversion.”¹⁶⁶ Brakel argues that “God enlightens the intellect, inclines the will, and makes man willing without violation of the will. In this manner God makes man alive.” Therefore, for Brakel, God’s regenerating grace does not impair the freedom of mankind in conversion.¹⁶⁷

In opposition to the argument that insuperable efficacy of grace eliminates the liberty of the will and converts men into a trunk and log, Witsius rather argues that divine grace “rescues and maintain” human freedom:

Nevertheless, God deals here with the rational creature in such a manner, that the liberty of the human will is not in the least affected: which he is so far from destroying by the energy of his power, that, On the contrary, he rescues and maintains it. He put, indeed, into the heart of Titus the earnest care of going, yet so as to undertake the journey of his own accord, 2 Cor. VIII. 16.17. It is a violence indeed, but that of heavenly love, the greater the sweeter. A certain kind of compulsion, but that of the most charming friendship; to the end, that the soul being loosed from the chains of sin and Satan, may rejoice in the most delightful liberty. God does not drag along the unwilling by head and shoulders. But makes them willing, Phil. II. 13. bringing his truth so closely to their understanding, that they cannot but assent, so effectually gaining upon their will by the charms of his goodness, that they are not able to reject them; but yield themselves conquered, and that with the highest complacency; exulting with joy, “O Lord, thou hast enticed me, and I was enticed, thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed,” Jer. XX. 7. I may well exult in this victory and triumph over the devil, for that I myself am conquered by thee.’ And who can be so rude, as to complain of any violence done to human liberty, by this winning power (so to speak) of the Deity?¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ Brakel states that a block or a stock “is incapable of being the recipient of God’s converting power, not being a suitable object for such operation.” Brakel, *Reasonable Services* II, 225.

¹⁶⁷ Brakel, *Reasonable Services* II, 224-25.

¹⁶⁸ “Ita tamen cum creatura rationali hic agit Deus, ut voluntatis humanae libertas illibata plane maneat: quam tantum abest ut hac roboris sui ἐνέργεια destruat, ut ex adverso eam vindicet asseratque. Indidit quidem cordi Titi proficiscendi stadium, sed ita ut ἀσθαιρετός ultra ac sua sponte iter susciperet. 2 Cor. VIII. 16. vis quidem est, sed coelestis amoris, eo major quo suavior coaction quaedam, sed blandissimae amicitiae, eo faciens, ut anima catenis peccati ac Diaboli solute, in jucundissima libertate

John Owen argues that if the will is forced, it is destroyed. He claims that the expression of compelling in the Scripture such as “Compel them to come in (Luke 14:23)” involves “the certainty of the event, not the manner of the operation on them.” In particular, Owen raises an issue. Since the fallen will before regeneration always acts in an opposition unto divine grace, one may wonder how regeneration can be done without compulsion or violence. He presents two answers for this question. First, human will’s opposition or aversion against grace is “against it as objectively proposed unto it.” That is, men resist only “the external dispensation of grace by the word.”¹⁶⁹ Thus, Owen states as follows:

The will, therefore, is not forced by any power put forth in grace, in that way wherein it is capable of making opposition unto it, but the prevalency of grace is of it as it is internal, working really and physically; which is not the object of the will’s opposition, for it is not proposed unto it as that which it may accept or refuse, but worketh effectually in it.¹⁷⁰

Second, Owen maintains that the act of turning to God is not a mere natural act but “a spiritual act” enabled antecedently by divine grace. Thus, he argues that “in order of nature, the acting of grace in the will in our conversion is antecedent unto its own acting.” To elaborate, employing the scholastic distinction between *conversio passiva* and *conversio activa*, Owen explains the state of the will in the former as “in the first act of conversion, acts not but as it is acted, moves not but as it is moved; and therefore is

delicietur. Non trahit Deus invitos & obtorto collo, sed facit volentes: Phil. II. 13. tam clare veritates suas mentibus ingerens, ut non possint non assentiri, tam efficaciter bonitatis voluntates dermulcens, ut non possint eas nolle: sed victim manus dent & quidem lubentissimi, cum gaudio acclamantes, Pellexistime, Jehova & pellectus sum, fortior fuisti me, & pravaluisti, Jer. XX, 7. Hac demum Victoria de Diabolo triumpho, quod victum me a te exsultem. Quisquamne est tam tetricus, qui lubentissima hac (ita loqui liceat) pollentia numinis, humanae libertati praejudicium creari queratur?” Herman Witsii, *De Economia Foederum Dei cum Hominibus* (Basileae, 1739), 262-263. Concerning the irresistible nature of grace, Witsius also states that “Vim ergo adhibet summam, qua vincatur summa naturae corruption: sed vim amicam, viamque sapientiae, quails naturam intelligentem ac rationalem decuit: quae ita libenter vincitur, ut non modo non resistat, quia Deo volenti convertere nihil potest resistere: verum etiam quia, si resisteret, sese infelicissimam arbitraretur.” Ibid., 263.

¹⁶⁹ Owen, *The Holy Spirit*, 319.

¹⁷⁰ Owen, *The Holy Spirit*, 319.

passive therein.” Therefore, it can follow that there is “an inward almighty secret act of the power of the Holy Ghost, producing or effecting in us the will of conversion unto God, so acting our wills as that they also act themselves, and that freely.” Consequently, for Owen, God’s grace offers no violence or compulsion unto human will.¹⁷¹

In a similar vein to Edwards and others Reformed writers, Charnock states that God does not take away human liberty. He maintains that since the will is a rational faculty, it is impossible for human beings to be forced to believe against their reason. It must be wrought upon rationally.¹⁷² Moreover, since the main work of regeneration consists in “faith and love,” it is impossible there can be any compulsion. Thus, Charnock argues that God changes “the inclination of the will” without altering the essential nature that God bestowed upon it and works on the will by “persuasion” which is agreeable to human nature.¹⁷³ Concerning the way irresistible grace works upon human will, Charnock elaborates as follows:

It is free and gentle. A constraint, not by force, but love, which is not an extrinsic force, but intrinsic and pleasant to the will; he bends the creature so, that at the very instant wherein the will is savingly wrought upon, it delightfully consents to its own happiness; he draws by the cords of a man, and by a secret touch upon the will makes it willing to be drawn, and moves it upon its own hinges. It is sweet and alluring; the spirit of grace is called ‘the oil of gladness;’ it is a delightful and ready motion which it causes in the will; it is a sweet efficacy, and an efficacious sweetness. At what time God doth savingly work upon the will, to draw the soul from sin and the world to himself, it doth with the greatest willingness, freedom, and delight follow after God, turn to him, close with him, and cleave to him, with all the heart, and with purpose never to depart from him: Cant. i. 4, ‘Draw me, and we will run after thee.’ Drawing signifies the efficacious power of grace; running signifies the delightful motion of grace; the will is drawn, as if it would not come; it comes, as if it were not drawn. His grace is so sweet and so strong, that he neither wrongs the liberty of his creature, nor doth prejudice his absolute power. As God moves necessary causes, necessarily; contingent causes, contingently; so he moves free

¹⁷¹ Owen, *The Holy Spirit*, 320.

¹⁷² Charnock, *Regeneration*, 286.

¹⁷³ Charnock, *Regeneration*, 287.

agents freely, without offering violence to their natures. The Spirit glides into the heart by the sweet illapses of grace, and victoriously allures the soul....¹⁷⁴

Thus, for Charnock, even though divine grace is an “insuperably victorious” and “unconquerable power,” it is also of “inexpressible sweetness.” That is, “Charming persuasions” and “invincible efficacy” are combined in the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.¹⁷⁵

Turretin also provides a detailed explanation of the relation between God’s grace and human freedom in regeneration. First of all, disallowing the opponents’ charge that Reformed doctrine of grace makes man “a log and a trunk,” he points out the difference between “a log and a trunk” and human will: whereas the former is incapable of being the recipient of God’s regenerating power, or being a suitable object for such operation, the latter is “the receptive subject of grace.”¹⁷⁶ Moreover, the human will is “not only the rational subject (which is capacious and conscious of grace), but also the living and moral instrument (which God uses to perfect actual conversion in him)-either of which cannot be applied to a log.”¹⁷⁷ Thus, Turretin insists that man can never be identified as “a log and a trunk” in his regeneration.¹⁷⁸

Second, Turretin asserts that operation of irresistible grace of God does not remove human freedom at all because it does not compel human will unwillingly:

The Spirit does not force the will and carry it on unwillingly to conversion, but glides most sweetly into the soul (although in a wonderful and ineffable manner, still most suitably to the will) and operates by an infusion of supernatural habits by which it is freed little by little from its innate depravity, so as to become willing from unwilling and living from dead.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ Charnock, *Regeneration*, 287-88.

¹⁷⁵ Charnock, *Regeneration*, 288.

¹⁷⁶ Turretin, *Institutio*, XV. IV. XVI.

¹⁷⁷ Turretin, *Institutio*, XV. VI. XIX.

¹⁷⁸ Turretin, *Institutio*, XV. IV. XVI.

¹⁷⁹ Turretin, *Institutio*, XV. IV. XVI. He also states that “Thus neither that strength nor efficacy compels the man unwillingly, nor sweetly moves him now running spontaneously; but each joined together

Concerning the nature of diving efficacy, Turretin explains further in detail as follows:

... our calling is a work of divine omnipotence, that no one may make it resistible; and it claims us for itself by a loving and most tender necessity of persuasion, that no one may imagine it to be forced or involuntary. Such is the nature of the things which are usually presented to the mind that the more strongly they act, the more sweetly do they flow into the mind. Thus no power is greater than love, or necessity stronger than charity, which, poured upon us like oil, pervades us with the sweetest delight and like the strongest bond constrains us (2 Cor.5:14). Thus the first truth can neither be known nor happily possessed, unless both with the highest freedom and with the strongest necessity. Thus the omnipotent and efficacious operation of the Spirit is not opposed to that sweet method by which God acts through precepts, exhortations and other things of the same kind; by which God speaks after our mode, although with all these he acts after his own.¹⁸⁰

Accordingly, for Turretin, rather than bringing any violence to man, or introducing a physical necessity, the operation of efficacious grace works so congruously to rational human nature that man wills most freely what he wills.¹⁸¹

Third, Turretin teaches that once a human will is renewed and acted upon by divine grace, it “converts itself to God and believing.”¹⁸² Thus, far from being hampered by the efficacious grace of God, human will is “the rather made perfect when delivered

both strengthens the weakness of man and overcomes the hatred of sin. It is powerful that it may not be frustrated; sweet that it may not be forced. Its power is supreme and inexpugnable that the corruption of nature may be conquered, as well as the highest impotence of acting well and the necessity of doing evil. Yet still it is friendly and agreeable, such as becomes an intelligent and rational nature.” Turretin, *Institutio*, XV. IV. XVIII.

¹⁸⁰ Turretin, *Institutio*, XV. IV. XXI. Of course, however, Turretin does not attenuate the irresistible nature of divine grace in regeneration: “However, whatever is that motion of efficacious grace, still it is such and so great that it is entirely invincible and insuperable; nor can any will of man resist God willing to convert him. This is the principal mark and properly the characteristic of efficacious grace by which it is distinguished from all the other gifts sometimes bestowed by God even upon the reprobate. For since the others can in different ways affect man and influence by illumination, coercing an even in some degree changing (at least as to external morality), this alone converts and recreates man; indeed with so great efficacy as infallibly to obtain its result and overcome any resistance of the will (which will be more fully demonstrated in what follows).” Turretin, *Institutio*, XV. IV. XXII.

¹⁸¹ Turretin clarifies the nature of coaction as “(1) In coaction, the principle is only extrinsic, to which he who is compelled contributes nothing; while here there is also an intrinsic principle because grace is the soul of our soul (*anima animae noscrae*). (2) Coaction is not in congruity with nature, but conversion perfects nature. (3) It is impossible and absurd (*asystaton*) for the will to be forced because thus it would be nolition (*noluntas*), not volition (*voluntas*).” Turretin, *Institutio*, XV. VII. XXXI.

¹⁸² Turretin, *Institutio*, XV. IV. XVI.

from the bondage of sin into the liberty of grace (God, who made the will, not taking away its nature and mode of acting, but confirming it).”¹⁸³ That is, according to Turretin, divine grace, which makes human beings willing from unwilling, does not take away but rather restores freedom of human beings.¹⁸⁴ Consequently, Turretin claims that efficacious grace and human freedom do not oppose each other.¹⁸⁵ Rather, they are “in the highest degree consistent with each other.”¹⁸⁶

(5) The Fifth Proposition: Conversion Should Be Prepared by Proper Means

Edwards’ final proposition is that even though “God be the sole author of man’s conversion, and of all holiness that accompanies it and follows it, yet this conversion and holiness are to be promoted in us by the use of proper means and endeavours.” In other words, in spite of the absolute role of divine grace in human salvation, “there are some certain acts which are in our power, and these are ordinarily required before the state of regeneration and conversion.”¹⁸⁷ Thus, Edwards urges that one must “with care and constancy” endeavor to use the means which God has appointed for the working of regeneration in human beings.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸³ Turretin, *Institutio*, XV. VI. XIX.

¹⁸⁴ He states that “For man does not cease to will most freely what he wills, although he wills it necessarily; nor does the grace which makes him willing from unwilling, take away, but rather restores liberty because it is liberty willingly and with joy to serve God.” Turretin, *Institutio*, XV. VI. XXIX.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Boston, *The Body of Divinity*, 411-412; idem, *Human Nature*, 102; Ames, *Marrow of Theology*, 159.

¹⁸⁶ Turretin, *Institutio*, XV. IV. XXI..

¹⁸⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 365.

¹⁸⁸ Edwards: *Theologia Reformata* III, 45. As with Edwards, many Reformed orthodox thinkers employ the idea of preparation for conversion. For example, Turretin states “We confess that in spiritual no less than in natural generation, we reach spiritual birth by many preceding operations and that God (who wills to perform that work in man not by violent seizures, or enthusiastical movements, but in a way suitable to our nature; and who carries it on not in one moment, but successively and by degrees) uses various dispositions by which man is little by little prepared for the reception of saving grace (at least in ordinary calling). Thus there are various acts antecedent to conversion and, as it were, steps to the thing (*gradus ad rem*) before he is brought to the state of regeneration, either external, which can be done by man

What means, acts or endeavors are then required on men's part in order to obtain grace and conversion? Edwards specifically mentions several things to do. First, he encourages people to use rational power to understand their spiritual state and the will of God for them:

We must inform ourselves aright, we must learn what our state and condition is, and we must labour to understand what is God's will concerning us, and what it is that he requires of us. we must consult ourselves, and look into our own breast, and make use of our reason and natural light, and exert our understandings and judgments. God hath not made us brutes or stocks, but rational creatures; wherefore let us act as such, as knowing that God is pleas'd to enlighten and convert men in the exercise of their natural faculties, and in the use of those powers and abilities which he hath given them, and thereby distinguish'd them from other creatures.¹⁸⁹

Second, Edwards also insists that one must pray "with the greatest importunity" and earnestly beg for the divine assistance to achieve "so great and weighty an enterprise."¹⁹⁰ He makes it clear that prayer does not "purchase" grace or God does not bestow grace "for the virtue or merit of one's prayer." Nevertheless, Edwards claims that since prayer is chosen as "one means of procuring it," one should ardently and incessantly pray "at the throne of grace."¹⁹¹ Third, Edwards asserts that the preaching of God's words is assigned

such as to enter a church, to hear the word and the like), or internal, which are excited by grace in the hearts of those not yet converted (such as the reception and apprehension of the presented word, a knowledge of the divine will, a certain sense of sin, the fear of punishment and a desire of deliverance)." Turretin, *Institutio*, XV. V. IV. See also Brakel, *Reasonable Services* II, 225; Owen, *The Holy Spirit*, 229-33; Mastricht, *Theologiae Theoretico-Practicae*, VI, III, XIX (663). The concept of preparation for conversion was a somewhat controversial issue among the New England Puritans. Concerning this, see W. K. B. Stoevers, 'A Faire and Easie Way to Heaven': *Covenant Theology and Antinomianism in Early Massachusetts* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1988); Robert Middlekauff, *The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals 1596-1728* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971); Charles E. White, "Were Hooker and Shepard Closet Arminians?" *Calvin Theological Journal* 20, no. 1 (1985): 33-42; James William Jones, "The Beginnings of American Theology: John Cotton, Thomas Hooker, Thomas Shepard and Peter Bulkeley" (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 1971); Norman Pettit, *The Heart Prepared* (New Haven, Conn. and London: Yale University Press, 1966). Nevertheless, the treatment of this issue is beyond the scope of this study.

¹⁸⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 367.

¹⁹⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 367. Edwards also writes that "He hath abundantly declared in his word, that this is one way which we are to make use of, and that it is generally necessary to the obtaining of happiness." Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Edwards: *Theologia Reformata* III, 45.

as “the great instrument” of conversion and regeneration. Therefore, he maintains that one should not only pray but also listen to the Word of God.¹⁹² In addition to listening to sermons, he argues, one should diligently and attentively read and meditate on Scripture in order to turn to God.¹⁹³ Fourth, Edwards asserts that “consideration” is another previous act for the new birth.¹⁹⁴ According to him, consideration is especially serviceable to free one’s thought from “vain and sinful objects which are the great corrupters of our minds.”¹⁹⁵ Fifth, Edwards maintains that one should do “mortification and self-denial” because some of them can be done in human power.¹⁹⁶ Lastly, he claims that one must avoid “idleness.” Edwards maintains that since it is “the great nourisher of vitious thoughts and actions,” one should spend time with “lawful business and religious employment.”¹⁹⁷ In sum, Edwards states as follows:

It is in our power to pray, to read the word, to hear it, to think and meditate on it, to consider our ways and to call our sins to remembrance, to abandon some of them, as to the outward act, to deny ourselves, in some measure to improve what happens to us in the world, to our good. Our abilities reach thus far; we have strength to perform these things Conversion and repentance are the sole gifts of God, but they are ordinarily acquir’d in the use of humane helps and endeavours. And we must make use of these, as far as in us lies; we must do all that on our part we are able to do, remembering this, that tho’ the change of our hearts be the effect of divine grace only, yet a neglect and contempt of the means is unjustifiable.¹⁹⁸

Nevertheless, Edwards evidently reaffirms that “grace is not due to those who improve their natural strength, and use the means of conversion and sanctification; nothing can be

¹⁹² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 367.

¹⁹³ Edwards: *Theologia Reformata* III, 45.

¹⁹⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 368.

¹⁹⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 368.

¹⁹⁶ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 368.

¹⁹⁷ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 369. Edwards adds that “remember that strong pangs and throws go before the spiritual birth; and therefore on you part you must be careful that you strive and struggle, wrestle and combat, that you labour and contend (as much as in you lies): you must indeavour with all your might to resist the temptations of the evil spirit.” Edwards: *Theologia Reformata* III, 45.

¹⁹⁸ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 369-70.

done by us to merit grace or salvation; it is for the merit of Christ that nay saving grace is imparted to us.”¹⁹⁹ In this regard, he clarifies the nature of our works as follows:

But tho’ no performances are acceptable to God for their worth, yet he himself commands us to do them, and will not accept of us without them. We are bid to read, pray, hear, shun the occasions of sin, avoid evil company, and use all other means and endeavours; not that there is any value in them, in respect of God, but because he hath ordained that they shall be forerunners of grace and mercy, and that in the use of them, grace shall be given to us. God doth not confer grace upon us for these endeavours, but he give it us by them.²⁰⁰

Moreover, Edwards argues that the preparations before conversion are not absolutely necessary. Without our asking and seeking, God himself sometimes does all. Thus, like the case of the conversion of St. Paul, even if they are wholly unprepared, God immediately acts on men’s soul and infuses his grace into them. Nonetheless, Edwards claims that the preparations are generally required:

But generally it is otherwise; he acts according to the rational nature of men, and for the most part in a moral way. They wrought upon by persuasion, and in the use of proper means. He disposes men for his special grace, by ordinary and common grace; he prepares them for one by the other.²⁰¹

Thus, Edwards opposes an extreme position which denies any preparations from human sides before conversion:

Wherefore here is an extreme to be avoided, which too many are apt to run into, namely, that because conversion and continuance in holiness are from God, and are the work of his holy spirit, therefore they think they may be idle and careless, and that they are excused from using any means and endeavours; and that they need not strive against their lusts and vitious propensions, or take any pains to curb and suppress them: they expect to be wholly assisted from above, therefore they sit still and do nothing.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 372.

²⁰⁰ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 372. Edwards also maintains that “Those previous acts are in our power, and they are ordinarily requisite to conversion and regeneration: And we have no reason to expect, that we can be regenerated and converted without these.” Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 372.

²⁰¹ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 374.

²⁰² Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 376.

Mentioning John 6:27 and Matthew 11:21, Edwards therefore concludes that one must diligently and laboriously endeavor to use the means in order to obtain eternal life and happiness.²⁰³

II. Criticism of Previous Scholarship on the Issue

The study of Edwards' doctrine of divine grace and conversion raises a fundamental question concerning the claim that traditional Reformed theology denied human freedom, especially in relation between the sovereign grace of God and human responsibility. First of all, according to Edwards, Reformed doctrine of the bondage of human will to sin does not indicate the complete loss of human freedom. Rather, for him, it refers to (1) human beings' inability to choose salvation, (2) and, therefore, the necessity of grace in salvation. In other words, it highlights the fact that since the nature of fallen human beings is sinful, they cannot choose not to be sinful without divine grace and there is no power of contrary choice in relation to God's grace and salvation.

Nevertheless, Edwards maintains that the essential function of the will is not destroyed. Therefore, even though men lost free choice, they still have a natural freedom from compulsion and a freedom of contrary choice in the earthly matters. In this regard, in spite of total depravity of mankind, Edwards and the other Reformed theologians of his time still assume genuine freedom and contingency. Consequently, Edwards' idea of the bondage of human choice to sin does not indicate a determination of human actions in general and, especially, not a determination of human beings to commit individual sins. There is no metaphysical determinism of all human actions here.

Second, there is, of course, a certain deterministic element in the order of salvation (but only one moment in salvation) because Edwards teaches that salvation is inaccessible to fallen humanity, outside of the range of human free willing, available by

²⁰³ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 376.

grace alone. However, according to him, grace does not force the will. Instead, it regenerates and reforms the will in order that it might freely chooses to believe. That is, although saving grace operates in the first moment of conversion without any concurrence with human will, it still is not coercive. Rather, God's grace alters human nature and thus it restores free choice.

One significant point Edwards makes in this argument is that even though God's grace is irresistible, it does not destroy the latter's own proper mode of operating. For Edwards, without compelling human beings, God concurs with human will in the work of conversion by turning the will in a manner suitable to itself or moving it according to its own nature. Indeed, grace does not impede men's willing at all but changes their nature and always works through their nature. For him, consequently, grace is not a mechanical or coercive force. To those who respond, it works according to the mode of human freedom.

Third, Edwards does not ignore the role of secondary causes in human salvation; he distinguishes several different kinds of causes in conversion and argues that God concurs with secondary causes in the second moment of conversion. Moreover, by distinguishing between the active and passive state of the will in the work of conversion, Edwards shows that *conversio activa* does not deny the function of human will as secondary cause. Namely, once they are enabled to believe, and are converted by grace which comes from God alone, they become "a principle of action" and they co-operate with God's grace in their salvation.²⁰⁴

In short, in Edwards' thought, the Reformed doctrine of grace and conversion does not conduce to metaphysical determinism. Unlike the criticism, we can see in his discussions that human freedom and contingency are still preserved in spite of the total depravity of mankind and irresistible grace of God. In particular, once divine grace

²⁰⁴ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 349.

changes human nature, humanity freely and voluntarily chooses to believe Christ without any coercion. Consequently, the previous charge that the Reformed doctrine of divine grace denies human freedom cannot be warranted at all, at least, by Edwards' discussion of the relation between divine grace, conversion and human freedom.

III. Conclusion

Edwards asserts that mankind is bound by the fetters of sin after the fall. For him, since free choice does not remain, human beings can do no spiritual good nor does he desire true spiritual good. Hence, man cannot cooperate in the salvation process without the effectual working of God's special grace. This prevenient grace, however, does not simply make it possible for people to respond. Grace is efficacious and effects conversion. Furthermore, contrary to Whitby's view, this saving grace, without which human beings cannot respond positively to the gospel, is only given to the elect who will believe. On all accounts of his view of the salvation of men, Edwards is a monergist.

Nevertheless, Edwards argues that once human beings are acted on and moved by God's grace, they can do spiritual good such as believing and repenting, and such actions can be regarded as their own personal and proper actions because it is by means of their wills that human beings act in doing good when God's grace moves them. Moreover, Edwards claims that even though human beings are converted by grace alone, they can "promote" conversion by the use of proper means and endeavors.²⁰⁵ Thus, although he clearly denies the Arminian claim that human beings have the power in themselves to stretch out their hand and receive the gift offered, Edwards does not ignore the role of human beings in the process of salvation, excessively stressing the sovereignty of God.

Finally, the reading of Edwards' discussion of the relation between divine grace and human freedom in the work of conversion and salvation defies the myth that

²⁰⁵ Edwards, *Veritas Redux*, 365.

Reformed theology destroys human freedom and it causes philosophical determinism. First of all, unlike the accusations, Edwards maintains that even though human beings lost free choice, they still have an essential freedom from force and a freedom of contrary choice in the earthly realms. Thus, the Reformed doctrine of bondage of human will to sin never indicates a metaphysical determination of human actions in general. Second, those who come to Christ by irresistible grace are not forced against their will. For Edwards, grace and salvation are never coercive: (1) Initial grace does not remove the basic root of human freedom which is spontaneity, (2) Once grace is offered, it changes the nature of fallen mankind and thereby restores human free choice, and (3) Besides, without compelling it, divine grace preserves human beings' own proper mode of operation and moves men according to their own nature. Third, his distinction of several different causes and that of *conversio activa* and *passiva* shows that God does not ignore the human role as a secondary cause in conversion. Consequently, in Edwards' understanding, divine grace and human free choice can be compatible with each other in the work of salvation because the former does not do any violence to the latter.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

It has been a commonly held belief that the Reformed doctrine of free choice in general and its view of the relation between human freedom and divine necessity in particular are deterministic. Namely, many modern scholars have argued that the Reformed understanding of human free choice in relationship to divine decree, predestination, providence, foreknowledge, and grace leaves no room for human freedom and responsibility and thus it ultimately leads to metaphysical or philosophical determinism.

However, Edwards' discussion of free choice and its relation to divine causality so completely defies the traditional assessment of the Reformed doctrine of free choice as to call into question the validity of the conventional scholarship on this issue. First of all, in Edwards' understanding, the Reformed doctrine of divine decree and human free choice does not conduce to any mechanical absolute necessity on human beings. According to him, divine decree occurs with the necessity of certainty or infallibility, not with that of compulsion. In particular, Edwards teaches that divine decree does not endanger human freedom because God decreed that contingent things occur contingently and necessary ones happen necessarily. In this regard, for him, rather than destroying them, the divine decree ensures contingency and freedom in the world. In other words, Edwards views the divine decree not as a threat to human freedom but as its ultimate warrant; since God decreed all things, without being left to the chaos of chance and nature, human beings are granted real freedom to act rationally and voluntarily. Moreover, he explains that even though an event or thing is called necessary with regard to the first cause, it is contingent by its nature free and undetermined with respect to the particular and proximate cause. Therefore, in Edwards' thought, human freedom is still maintained in spite of the immutable and infallible decree of God.

Second, unlike the deterministic interpretation of traditional Reformed thought on divine foreknowledge and human free choice, in Edwards' view, divine foreknowledge does not remove human free choice at all. He claims that even though God infallibly foreknows future events, it does not cause any necessity of coercion to human beings because God not only foreknows the events itself, but also foreknows the mode of the events, whether necessary or contingent. Simply put, God foreknows contingents as contingents with certainty. Hence, in Edwards' understanding, despite God's foreknowledge, the will of mankind still can function freely and voluntarily without any coercion. Indeed, for him, the contingency of reality is not marred by divine foreknowledge, but rather ensured by it with certainty. Edwards also insists that future contingent events are undetermined and contingent with respect to the second causes. Thus, for him, human action as a secondary cause is still contingent notwithstanding the immutable and infallible foreknowledge of God. Consequently, previous scholarship's identification of the Reformed doctrine of divine foreknowledge with determinism does not quite fit into the case of Edwards at all.

Third, in Edwards' understanding, the Reformed doctrine of providence does not make human beings passive pawns or senseless stocks. In order to preserve human freedom in his doctrine of providence, Edwards once again relies on the distinction between the superior and inferior cause and asserts that its distinction allows creatures to be subject to God without losing their own causality. Thus, even though he believes in the sovereign providence over the creatures, he clearly affirms the contingency and freedom of the secondary or inferior causes. To Edwards, it is clear that God's acts as the first cause do not destroy, but rather preserve the essential freedom of man as the second cause, who concurs together in a free effect. In this regard, Edwards does not view man's lasting dependence on God as the creator and the first cause of everything as an obstacle or threat to human freedom at all. Furthermore, for him, God's providential control of the

universe does not destroy human free choice because divine providence works through the necessity of certainty or infallibility, not through that of compulsion or coercion.

Concerning the issue of providence and human freedom, Edwards specifically claims that the Reformed emphasis upon the sovereign will of God does not make God the author of sin. He presents many arguments to support this argument. However, for him, the Reformed doctrine of physical premotion or divine concurrence particularly helps overcome this false charge; on the basis of the distinction between physical acts and depravity of them, he clearly argues that even though God concurs to every act of human beings, He does it as it is a physical act. That is to say, God concurs with the bare act of vice, not with the evil of it. Therefore, in Edwards' understanding, evil acts can be properly ascribed to human beings' own acts through their misuse of free choice and thereby they themselves are the authors of their evil deeds. Besides, employing the distinction between the necessity of event and that of compulsion again, Edwards argues that even though God has decreed sin, divine decree does not force human persons to sin. Rather, he insists that it is every man's own free willing and acting that makes the sin. Indeed, in Edwards's thought, the Reformed doctrine of providence or decree never leads to causal determinism which makes human beings do things they otherwise do not want to do.

Fourth, even though modern scholars have charged that the Reformed view of the relation between the sovereign grace of God and human responsibility destroys human free choice or conduces to metaphysical determinism, Edwards' approach to the subject points toward a different conclusion. First, in Edwards' thought, the Reformed doctrine of the bondage of human will does not indicate the complete loss of human freedom. Rather, it teaches that since the nature of fallen human beings is sinful, they cannot choose not to be sinful without divine grace, and there is no power of contrary choice in relation to God's grace and salvation. Thus, for him, in spite of the loss of free choice in the matter of salvation, human beings still possess a natural freedom from compulsion

and a freedom of contrary choice in the earthly matters. That is, Edwards firmly puts the issue of bondage back to the soteriological realm and explicitly affirms the genuine integrity of secondary causality because the essential faculty of the will is not destroyed. In his view, therefore, Reformed doctrine of total depravity or original sin does not remove genuine freedom and contingency. Second, according to Edwards, grace does not compel the will in the work of salvation. Instead, it regenerates and reforms the will in order that it might freely choose to believe. Rather than denying it, in a word, God's grace restores free choice. Third, for him, even though God's grace is irresistible, it does not destroy the human will's own proper mode of operating. Indeed, Edwards argues that in the work of conversion, grace works in a manner suitable to the human will or moves it according to its own nature. Besides, he asserts that the role of the will as the secondary cause is not ignored at all in the process of human salvation; God concurs with the secondary cause in the second moment of conversion (*conversio activa*) and thus the function of human will as secondary cause is preserved.

In sum, the examination of Edwards' understanding of free choice and its relation between human freedom and divine necessity such as divine decree, predestination, foreknowledge, providence, and grace enables us to challenge previous misunderstandings of the Reformed doctrine of free choice. That is to say, in Edwards' discussions of the issue, Reformed theology does not lead to metaphysical or philosophical determinism at all. Quite contrary to the charge, however, Edwards teaches that the Reformed conviction of divine initiatives such as decree and providence does not rule out human freedom or contingency; in his understanding, the strong emphasis on the divine will rather establishes a realm for the freedom of human willing and the contingency of events. Thus, for Edwards, this divine sovereignty is quite different from causal determinism which makes it impossible for human persons to do otherwise than they do. Certainly, the study of his writings shows that Edwards maintains the typical Reformed balance between the sovereignty of God and human freedom, particularly to

the extent that he consistently echoes the thought of his Reformed brethren.¹ Therefore, given the chief conclusions of this study, previous scholarship's deterministic interpretation of Reformed doctrine of free choice cannot be warranted at least by Edwards, and this study, in turn, suggests that the reading of Edwards points toward the need for a broad reassessment of Reformed understanding of free choice in the Reformation and Post-Reformation eras.

¹ Edwards needs neither to opt for human freedom in the sense of absolute autonomy and indifference of the human will nor divine determinism in the sense of causal predetermination of everything by divine cause. Concerning this tendency in the Reformed thought, Van Asselt states that "Reformed theologians tried to locate the freedom of creatures between the Scylla of an independent autonomy and the Charybdis of a passive shadow play, and their extensive distinctions were necessary to avoid both errors." Van Asselt, *Reformed Thought on Freedom*, 18.

APPENDIX

THEOLOGICAL THESES FOR PUBLIC DEFENSE

Theses Pertaining to John Edwards' (1637-1716) Doctrine of Free Choice

I.

Edwards argues that in the postlapsarian state, human beings lost free choice (*liberum arbitrium*); since free choice is enslaved to sin, they cannot help but sin, and can do no spiritual good in the fallen state though they can do some earthly good. Nevertheless, for Edwards, the faculty of will (*voluntas*) is not destroyed even in the postlapsarian state. In other words, the essential nature of will as rational spontaneity has not been destroyed. For Edwards, after the fall, human beings lost the freedom from sin and from misery, but they remain endowed with the natural freedom from necessity. This distinction is significant because previous scholars' charge that the Reformed doctrine of original sin or total depravity of human beings rules out any human freedom does not apply to Edwards' case.

II.

Regarding the relation between divine decree and human freedom, Edwards strongly argues that the former does not remove the latter at all. In order to support this claim, he distinguishes two different kinds of necessity: the necessity of restraint or compulsion and that of the event or infallibility. Edwards asserts that even though the former destroy man's freedom, the latter that the divine determination brings with it does not take it away. Moreover, he claims that since God decreed not only the things to happen but also the modes of things, the effectivity of his decree is such that both contingent things happen contingently and necessary things happen necessarily. In this regard, for Edwards, rather than destroying them, the divine decree ensures contingency and human freedom in the world. Therefore, in Edwards' understanding, the Reformed doctrine of divine decree and human free choice does not conduce to any mechanical absolute necessity on human beings.

III.

In order to show that the divine decree does not destroy any possibility of contingencies or human freedom, Edwards also employs the scholastic distinction between God as the first cause and mankind as the second cause. He insists that even though an event or thing is called necessary with regard to the first cause, it is contingent by its nature free and undetermined with respect to the particular and proximate cause; necessity does not apply to the second cause but only to the first cause. Thus, in spite of the immutability of God's decree, freedom and contingency can exist on the level of the secondary causes. Consequently, Edwards' discussion of free choice and its relation to the divine decree completely defies the traditional assessment of the Reformed doctrine of free choice as determinism.

IV.

Edwards teaches that God infallibly foreknows future events. However, he argues that divine foreknowledge does not cause any necessity of compulsion to human beings because God not only foreknows the events itself, but also foreknows the mode of the events, whether necessary or contingent. In other words, God foreknows that they would happen in this or that way, namely some necessarily, others contingently and freely. Hence, according to Edwards, despite God's foreknowledge, the will of mankind still can function freely and voluntarily without any coercion. Accordingly, Edwards' thought on divine foreknowledge and human freedom does not conform to the stereotype of Reformed theology as a deterministic system.

V.

Edwards' distinction between the first cause and the second cause also points toward a different conclusion than that of previous scholars on the issue of divine foreknowledge and human free choice. Edwards claims that an event or thing that is necessary with respect to God as the first cause can be contingent with respect to the secondary causes. Thus, he maintains that God can infallibly foresee future contingent events because they are determined and certain with regard to the first cause. However, Edwards also claims that our wills are still placed among the causes of things because future contingent events are undetermined and contingent with respect to the second causes. In this regard, for him, human action as a secondary cause can be still contingent notwithstanding the immutable and infallible foreknowledge of God. Therefore, contrary to the deterministic interpretation of traditional Reformed thought on divine foreknowledge and human free choice, divine foreknowledge, in Edwards' view, does not remove human free choice at all.

VI.

In order to preserve human freedom in his doctrine of providence, Edwards once again relies on the distinction between the superior and inferior cause and asserts that its distinction allows creatures to be subject to God without losing their own causality. To Edwards, it is clear that God's acts as the first cause do not destroy, but rather preserve the essential freedom of man as the second cause, who concurs together in a free effect. Furthermore, Edwards argues that divine providence works through the necessity of certainty or infallibility, not through the necessity of coercion or compulsion. Consequently, previous scholarship's identification of the Reformed doctrine of divine providence with determinism does not fit into the case of Edwards at all.

VII.

The charge that the Reformed doctrine of providence makes God the author of sin cannot be applied to the case of Edwards' theology. He argues that God's providence does not work through evil human beings as though they were stones or tree trunks. Rather, they freely and voluntarily choose between different acts and sin in their freedom without any coercion. Given his teachings on the distinction between the first and the second causes and between the necessity of event and compulsion, it was never Edwards' view that the moral acts of human beings are predetermined by God to the exclusion of their free choice of sin. In particular, for him, the Reformed doctrine of physical premotion or

divine concurrence particularly helps overcome the charge; on the basis of the distinction between physical acts and depravity of them, he clearly argues that even though God concurs to every act of human beings, He does it as it is a physical act. That is to say, God concurs with the bare act of vice, not with the evil of it. Therefore, in Edwards' understanding, evil acts can be properly ascribed to human beings' own acts through their misuse of free choice and thereby they themselves are the authors of their evil deeds.

VIII.

Even though modern scholars have charged that the Reformed view of the relation between the sovereign grace of God and human responsibility destroys human free choice or conduces to metaphysical determinism, Edwards' approach to the subject points toward a different conclusion. First, according to Edwards' view of the bondage of human will, in spite of the loss of free choice in the matter of salvation, human beings still possess a natural freedom from compulsion and a freedom of contrary choice in earthly matters. Second, Edwards argues that without compelling the will in the work of salvation, grace regenerates and reforms the will in order that it might freely choose to believe. Third, for him, even though God's grace is irresistible, grace works in a manner suitable to the human will or moves it according to its own nature. Fourth, Edwards claims that God concurs with the secondary cause in the second moment of conversion (*conversio activa*) and thus the freedom of human will as secondary cause is preserved.

Theses Pertaining to Ph.D. Course Work

I.

John Ball's (1585-1640) doctrine of covenant theology defies the simple analysis of covenant theology found in much earlier scholarship, which portrays it as falling into legalism and as discontinuous with the Reformation-or, alternatively, as a new biblical theology set against the Reformed orthodoxy of its age. In particular, the examination of the conditionality of the covenant of grace in Ball's theology clearly shows that, (1) Ball is in continuity with the thought of Reformers like Calvin and Vermigli, and (2), contrary to previous argument of two traditions in the Reformed covenant theology, Ball's theology rests on both a unilateral and a bilateral dimension to the covenant of grace within the context of a monergistic soteriology. Consequently, his understanding of the covenant of works and the conditionality of the covenant of grace reflects that Ball establishes his covenant theology on the foundation of the Reformed tradition by inheriting and sharing the covenant doctrine of his Reformed forerunners. In this sense, Ball's covenant theology belongs to the mainline of the developing Reformed tradition.

II.

Jacobus Arminius' (1559-1609) idea of the effects of the original sin on humanity affirms many points of the Reformed tradition. Nevertheless, his understanding of it is very different from that of the Reformed in some critical points. This is particularly evident in his understandings of the inclusion of Humanity in Adam against the Reformed doctrine of predestination, the effects of original sin on human free choice, the operation of grace in the fallen humanity, and the priority of the intellect over the will. These differences

between Arminius and the Reformed position are not to be underestimated. Therefore, in spite of many similarities, Arminius' theological system is clearly an alternative theological system to that of the Reformed. That is, contrary to previous scholarship, Arminius' understanding of the effects of Adam's first sin manifests an alternative theological system differing at many points from the Reformed theology of the day.

III.

Peter Martyr Vermigli's (1499-1562) doctrine of free choice defies previous historical myths about Reformed theology that human beings completely lose their freedom because of a bondage of the will, and divine foreknowledge or predestination reduces man to passive and senseless stocks or blocks. Contrary to the previous deterministic interpretation of Reformed thought on free choice, however, Vermigli's doctrine of free choice clearly shows that man still retains the natural freedom from compulsion even after the fall, and divine decree and human free choice can be compatible. Moreover, an examination of Vermigli's doctrine of free choice shows that there is no evidence for previous scholarship's argument that Reformed theology is purely speculative and rigidly rationalistic because the whole body of theology is deduced from a single predestinarian 'central dogma' by deductive procedure. Rather, an examination of Vermigli's locus method testifies that his doctrine of free choice is directly derived from his exegesis of the Scripture.

IV.

In his interpretation of the Major Prophets, Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) generally employs exegetical techniques which operate within the bounds of his pre-critical hermeneutic presuppositions and principles and thus in Edwards' interpretation of the Major Prophets, his hermeneutical methodology follows more closely the sixteenth and seventeenth-century pre-critical model, more in continuity with the patristic and the medieval exegetical traditions, than the characteristics of modern critical exegesis. In particular, the examination of Edwards' exegetical methods in his interpretation of the Major Prophets enables us to correct some problems of the previous scholarship on Jonathan Edwards' hermeneutical methodology. First, previous rigid or simple categorization of him as a literalist, spiritualist or typologist by a number of scholars cannot be warranted here. His interpretation of the Major Prophets obviously shows that rather than categorize him simply as literal, typological or allegorical, one should approach his hermeneutics in a more comprehensive way. Second, unlike J. Kreider's insistence, it is not the Christological focus but his pursuit of a literal historical sense of the text in the practice of typology that distinguishes Edwards' typological interpretation from allegory. Third, contrary to R. Stein who argues that Edwards' emphasis on the spiritual sense shows a significant discontinuity between Edwards and the Reformation tradition, as the Reformed exegetes did, the spiritual meaning was relocated within the literal meaning of the text in his interpretation of the Major Prophets. That is, Edwards' interpretation of the Major Prophets shows that his approach to the spiritual meaning is not different from that of the Reformed exegetes.

V.

The comparison of Cotton Mather (1663-1728) and William Perkins (1558-1602) shows that there are some minor differences between them concerning the idea of vocation and callings. However, the similarities, such as the emphasis of salvation by grace through faith as the essential foundation of the particular or personal calling and the only criteria for evaluating the worth of a person's deeds, the strong belief in God's active providence in one's callings and the identical criteria for the choice of vocation, the concern for the welfare of the society and the use of the material goods in a godly manner, and the concern for the danger of covetousness and idleness in fulfilling the particular callings, far greatly supersedes the differences between Mather and Perkins. Consequently, these similarities between Mather and Perkins particularly testify that there are significant problems in the previous scholarship's understanding of the later Puritan's teaching on the vocation. In particular, contrary to previous older scholarship which argues the essential discontinuity between the earlier and the later Puritans, Mather's doctrine of vocation shows that he stands in the continuity with that of his theological predecessors. In this regard, a reassessment of the later Puritan's doctrine of vocation is needed, especially given the continuity between Mather's idea and that of Perkins who is a representative early Puritan thinker on vocation.

VI.

An examination of Herman Bavinck's (1854-1921) understanding of the human body and soul permits some conclusions concerning his anthropology. First, Bavinck is largely Augustinian because he maintains two substances in man, whereas he follows the scholastic tradition in his view of the relation of body and soul, and the functions and powers of the soul. Second, nevertheless, Bavinck articulates an anthropology that attempts to mediate between the Augustinian and Thomist traditions, especially on the relation of body and soul. Third, even though his anthropology was deeply influenced by that of previous major Christian thinkers, Bavinck's idea is not simply a repetition of them. In other words, he does not simply imitate Augustinian or the scholastic doctrine of human beings. Rather, Bavinck's anthropology also includes his own characteristic, distinctive and unique arguments of human nature.

VII.

A study of the philosophical foundations of Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher's (1768-1834) hermeneutics shows some conclusions regarding his Hermeneutic: First, while Schleiermacher's hermeneutics is shaped by various ideas and philosophies, the most important influence on his hermeneutical development, however, can be traced to German Romanticism and Neo-Platonism. Second, in spite of his critique, the influence of Enlightenment is still evident in Schleiermacher's hermeneutics. Third, even though he works under the influence of diverse philosophical backgrounds, Schleiermacher's hermeneutics is not dominated by any single philosophy or idea of his time. He never goes to the extremes. Instead, Schleiermacher synthesizes various philosophical traditions and creates his own unique hermeneutics.

VIII.

A comparison of Abraham Kuyper's doctrine of general revelation with that of John Calvin and Herman Bavinck shows that all three men agree that God's revelatory activity through general revelation continues even after the fall and the fallen human beings can see and comprehend God's general revelation both inside and outside their own beings. However, according to them, it does not produce the saving knowledge. That is, despite the objective sufficiency of general revelation, the effects of sin are so devastating that general revelation never results in worshipful service of God apart from the redemptive working of the Holy Spirit. Thus, contrary to Bruce Demarest's argument on Kuyper's general revelation, Kuyper is in essential agreement with Calvin and Bavinck on the subject of general revelation. In short, Kuyper's doctrine of general revelation follows more closely that of Calvin more in continuity with the Reformed tradition than the characteristics of Karl Barth's.

Miscellaneous Thesis

I.

It is a commonly held belief that the exegetical methods of the Antiochene and Alexandrian schools are represented by the literal historical and the allegorical interpretations, respectively, and they are in strong tension with each other in the early Patristic period. Theodoret of Cyrus' (c.393- c.460) *Commentary on the Song of Songs* shows that the distinction between the Antiochene and Alexandrian approaches is not quite as big as some would have us believe. Contrary to previous scholarship, even though Theodoret belongs to the Antiochene exegetical tradition which strongly pursues the literal historical meaning of the text, his exegetical methods for the interpretation of the Song of Songs are considerably similar to that of Origen who clearly shows the features of the Alexandrian exegetical tradition. Therefore, this reading of Theodoret's *Commentary on the Song of Songs* points toward the need for a broader reassessment of the exegetical efforts of the Antiochene and Alexandrian biblical interpreters in the early Patristic period because the rigid categorization directed to these two schools does not apply to Theodoret's interpretation of the Song of Songs.

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